AN

ESSAY

ON THE

HISTORY

OF

CIVIL SOCIETY.

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AN

ESSAY

ON THE HISTORY OF

CIVIL SOCIETY.

PART FIRST.

Of the General Characteristics of Human Nature.

SECTION I.

Of the question relating to the State of Nature.

NATURAL productions are generally formed by degrees. Vegetables are raised from a tender shoot, and animals from an infant state. The latter being active, extend together their operations and their powers, and have a progress in what they perform, as well as in the faculties they acquire. This progress in the case of man is con-

tinued to a greater extent than in that of any other animal. Not only the individual advances from infancy to manhood, but the ſpecies itſelf from rudeneſs to civilization. Hence the ſuppoſed departure of mankind from the ſtate of their nature; hence our conjectures and different opinions of what man muſt have been in the firſt age of his being. The poet, the hiſtorian, and the moraliſt, frequently allude to this ancient time; and under the emblems of gold, or of iron, repreſent a condition, and a manner of life, from which mankind have either degenerated, or on which they have greatly improved. On either ſuppoſition, the firſt ſtate of our nature muſt have borne no reſemblance to what men have exhibited in any ſubſequent period; hiſtorical monuments, even of the earlieſt date, are to be conſidered as novelties; and the moſt common eſtabliſhments of human ſociety are to be claſſed among the encroachments which fraud, oppreſſion, or a buſy invention, have made upon the reign of nature, by which the chief of our grievances or bleſſings were equally with-held.

Among the writers who have attempted to diſtinguiſh, in the human character, its original qualities, and to point out the limits between nature and art, ſome have repreſented mankind in their firſt condition, as poſſeſſed of mere animal ſenſibility, without any exerciſe of the faculties that render them ſuperior to the brutes, without any political union, without any means of explaining their ſentiments,

timents, and even without possessing any of the apprehensions and passions which the voice and the gesture are so well fitted to express. Others have made the state of nature to consist in perpetual wars kindled by competition for dominion and interest, where every individual had a separate quarrel with his kind, and where the presence of a fellow-creature was the signal of battle.

The desire of laying the foundation of a favourite system, or a fond expectation, perhaps, that we may be able to penetrate the secrets of nature, to the very source of existence, have, on this subject, led to many fruitless inquiries, and given rise to many wild suppositions. Among the various qualities which mankind possess, we select one or a few particulars on which to establish a theory, and in framing our account of what man was in some imaginary state of nature, we overlook what he has always appeared within the reach of our own observation, and in the records of history.

In every other instance, however, the natural historian thinks himself obliged to collect facts, not to offer conjectures. When he treats of any particular species of animals, he supposes, that their present dispositions and instincts are the same which they originally had, and that their present manner of life is a continuance of their first destination. He admits, that his knowledge of the material system of the world consists in a collection of facts,

or at moſt, in general tenets derived from particular obſervations and experiments. It is only in what relates to himſelf, and in matters the moſt important, and the moſt eaſily known, that he ſubſtitutes hypotheſis inſtead of reality, and confounds the provinces of imagination and reaſon, of poetry and ſcience.

But without entering any further on queſtions either in moral or phyſical ſubjects, relating to the manner or to the origin of our knowledge; without any diſparagement to that ſubtilty which would analyſe every ſentiment, and trace every mode of being to its ſource; it may be ſafely affirmed, That the character of man, as he now exiſts, that the laws of his animal and intellectual ſyſtem, on which his happineſs now depends, deſerve our principal ſtudy; and that general principles relating to this or any other ſubject, are uſeful only ſo far as they are founded on juſt obſervation, and lead to the knowledge of important conſequences, or ſo far as they enable us to act with ſucceſs when we would apply either the intellectual or the phyſical powers of nature, to the purpoſes of human life.

If both the earlieſt and the lateſt accounts collected from every quarter of the earth, repreſent mankind as aſſembled in troops and companies; and the individual always joined by affection to party, while he is poſſibly oppoſed to another; employed in the exerciſe of recollection and foreſight;

sight; inclined to communicate his own sentiments, and to be made acquainted with those of others; these facts must be admitted as the foundation of all our reasoning relative to man. His mixed disposition to friendship or enmity, his reason, his use of language and articulate sounds, like the shape and the erect position of his body, are to be considered as so many attributes of his nature: they are to be retained in his description, as the wing and the paw are in that of the eagle and the lion, and as different degrees of fierceness, vigilance, timidity, or speed, have a place in the natural history of different animals.

If the question be put, What the mind of man could perform, when left to itself, and without the aid of any foreign direction? we are to look for our answer in the history of mankind. Particular experiments which have been found so useful in establishing the principles of other sciences, could probably, on this subject, teach us nothing important, or new: We are to take the history of every active being from his conduct in the situation to which he is formed, not from his appearance in any forced or uncommon condition; a wild man therefore, caught in the woods, where he had always lived apart from his species, is a singular instance, not a specimen of any general character. As the anatomy of the eye which had never received the impressions of light, or that of an ear which had never felt the impulse of sounds, would probably exhibit defects

defects in the very ſtructure of the organs themſelves, ariſing from their not being applied to their proper functions; ſo any particular caſe of this ſort would only ſhew in what degree the powers of apprehenſion and ſentiment could exiſt where they had not been employed, and what would be the defects and imbecilities of a heart in which the emotions that ariſe in ſociety had never been felt.

Mankind are to be taken in groupes, as they have always ſubſiſted. The hiſtory of the individual is but a detail of the ſentiments and thoughts he has entertained in the view of his ſpecies: and every experiment relative to this ſubject ſhould be made with entire ſocieties, not with ſingle men. We have every reaſon, however, to believe, that in the caſe of ſuch an experiment made, we ſhall ſuppoſe, with a colony of children traſplanted from the nurſery, and left to form a ſociety apart, untaught, and undiſciplined, we ſhould only have the ſame things repeated, which, in ſo many different parts of the earth, have been tranſacted already. The members of our little ſociety would feed and ſleep, would herd together and play, would have a language of their own, would quarrel and divide, would be to one another the moſt important objects of the ſcene, and, in the ardour of their friendſhips and competitions, would overlook their perſonal danger, and ſuſpend the care of their ſelf-preſervation. Has not the human race been planted like the colony in queſtion?

Who

Who has directed their courſe? whoſe inſtruction have they heard? or whoſe example have they followed?

Nature, therefore, we ſhall preſume, having given to every animal its mode of exiſtence, its diſpoſitions and manner of life, has dealt equally with the human race; and the natural hiſtorian who would collect the properties of this ſpecies, may fill up every article now as well as he could have done in any former age. The attainments of the parent do not deſcend in the blood of his children, nor is the progreſs of man to be conſidered as a phyſical mutation of the ſpecies. The individual, in every age, has the ſame race to run from infancy to manhood, and every infant, or ignorant perſon, now is a model of what man was in his original ſtate. He enters on his career with advantages peculiar to his age; but his natural talent is probably the ſame. The uſe and application of this talent is changing, and men continue their works in progreſſion through many ages together: They build on foundations laid by their anceſtors; and in a ſucceſſion of years, tend to a perfection in the application of their faculties, to which the aid of long experience is required, and to which many generations muſt have combined their endeavours. We obſerve the progreſs they have made; we diſtinctly enumerate many of its ſteps; we can trace them back to a diſtant antiquity; of which no record remains, nor any monument is preſerved to inform us

us what were the openings of this wonderful ſcene. The conſequence is, that inſtead of attending to the character of our ſpecies, where the particulars are vouched by the ſureſt authority, we endeavour to trace it through ages and ſcenes unknown; and, inſtead of ſuppoſing that the beginning of our ſtory was nearly of a piece with the ſequel, we think ourſelves warranted to reject every circumſtance of our preſent condition and frame, as adventitious, and foreign to our nature. The progreſs of mankind from a ſuppoſed ſtate of animal ſenſibility, to the attainment of reaſon, to the uſe of language, and to the habit of ſociety, has been accordingly painted with a force of imagination, and its ſteps have been marked with a boldneſs of invention that would tempt us to admit, among the materials of hiſtory, the ſuggeſtions of fancy, and to receive, perhaps, as the model of our nature in its original ſtate, ſome of the animals whoſe ſhape has the greateſt reſemblance to ours*.

It would be rediculous to affirm, as a diſcovery, that the ſpecies of the horſe was probably never the ſame with that of the lion; yet, in oppoſition to what has dropped from the pens of eminent writers, we are obliged to obſerve, that men have always appeared among animals a diſtinct and a ſuperior race; that neither the poſſeſſion of ſimilar organs, nor the approximation of ſhape, nor the uſe of the

* *Rouſſeau* ſur l'origine de l'inegalité parmi les hommes.

hand

hand † nor the continued intercourſe with this ſovereign artiſt, has enabled any other ſpecies to blend their nature or their inventions with his; that in his rudeſt ſtate, he is found to be above them; and in his greateſt degeneracy, never deſcends to their level. He is, in ſhort, a man in every condition; and we can learn nothing of his nature from the analogy of other animals. If we would know him, we muſt attend to himſelf, to the courſe of his life, and the tenor of his conduct. With him the ſociety appears to be as old as the individual, and the uſe of the tongue as univerſal as that of the hand or the foot. If there was a time in which he had his acquaintance with his own ſpecies to make, and his faculties to acquire, it is a time of which we have no record, and in relation to which our opinions can ſerve no purpoſe, and are ſupported by no evidence.

We are often tempted into theſe boundleſs regions of ignorance or conjecture, by a fancy which delights in creating rather than in merely retaining the forms which are preſented before it: we are the dupes of a ſubtilty, which promiſes to ſupply every defect of our knowledge, and, by filling up a few blanks in the ſtory of nature, pretends to conduct our apprehenſion nearer to the ſource of exiſtence. On the credit of a few obſervations, we are apt to preſume, that the ſecret may ſoon be laid open,

† Traité de l'eſprit.

and that what is termed *wiſdom* in nature, may be referred to the operation of phyſical powers. We forget that phyſical powers, employed in ſucceſſion or together, and combined to a ſalutary purpoſe, conſtitute thoſe very proofs of deſign from which we infer the exiſtence of God; and that this truth being once admitted, we are no longer to ſearch for the ſource of exiſtence; we can only collect the laws which the Author of nature has eſtabliſhed; and in our lateſt as well as our earlieſt diſcoveries, only perceive a mode of creation or providence before unknown.

We ſpeak of art as diſtinguiſhed from nature; but art itſelf is natural to man. He is in ſome meaſure the artificer of his own frame, as well as of his fortune, and is deſtined, from the firſt age of his being, to invent and contrive. He applies the ſame talents to a variety of purpoſes, and acts nearly the ſame part in very different ſcenes. He would be always improving on his ſubject, and he carries this intention where-ever he moves, through the ſtreets of the populous city, or the wilds of the foreſt. While he appears equally fitted to every condition, he is upon this account unable to ſettle in any. At once obſtinate and fickle, he complains of innovations, and is never ſated with novelty. He is perpetually buſied in reformations, and is continually wedded to his errors. If he dwell in a cave, he would improve it into a cottage; if he has already built, he would ſtill build to a greater extent.

extent. But he does not propoſe to make rapid and haſty tranſitions; his ſteps are progreſſive and ſlow; and his force, like the power of a ſpring, ſilently preſſes on every reſiſtance; an effect is ſometimes produced before the cauſe is perceived; and with all his talent for projects, his work is often accompliſhed before the plan is deviſed. It appears, perhaps, equally difficult to retard or to quicken his pace; if the projector complain he is tardy, the moraliſt thinks him unſtable; and whether his motions be rapid or ſlow, the ſcenes of human affairs perpetually change in his management: His emblem is a paſſing ſtream, not a ſtagnating pool. We may deſire to direct his love of improvement to its proper object, we may wiſh for ſtability of conduct; but we miſtake human nature, if we wiſh for a termination of labour, or a ſcene of repoſe.

The occupations of men, in every condition, beſpeak their freedom of choice, their various opinions, and the multiplicity of wants by which they are urged: but they enjoy, or endure, with a ſenſibility, or a phlegm, which are nearly the ſame in every ſituation. They poſſeſs the ſhores of the Caſpian, or the Atlantic, by a different tenure, but with equal eaſe. On the one they are fixed to the ſoil, and ſeem to be formed for ſettlement, and the accommodation of cities: The names they beſtow on a nation, and on its teritory, are the ſame. On the other they are mere animals of paſſage, prepared to roam on the face of the earth, and with

their

their herds, in search of new pasture and favourable seasons, to follow the sun in his annual course.

Man finds his lodgment alike in the cave, the cottage, and the palace; and his subsistence equally in the woods, in the dairy, or the farm. He assumes the distinction of titles, equipage, and dress; he devises regular systems of government, and a complicated body of laws; or naked in the woods has no badge of superiority but the strength of his limbs and the sagacity of his mind; no rule of conduct but choice; no tie with his fellow-creatures but affection, the love of company, and the desire of safety. Capable of a great variety of arts, yet dependent on none in particular for the preservation of his being; to whatever length he has carried his artifice, there he seems to enjoy the conveniences that suit his nature, and to have found the condition to which he is destined. The tree which an American, on the banks of the Oroonoko*, has chosen to climb, for the retreat, and the lodgement of his family, is to him a convenient dwelling. The sopha, the vaulted dome, and the colonade, do not more effectually content their native inhabitant.

If we are asked therefore, Where the state of nature is to be found? we may answer, It is here; and it matters not whether we are understood to speak in the island of Great Britain, at the Cape of

* Lafitau mœurs des sauvages.

Good

Good Hope, or the Straits of Magellan. While this active being is in the train of employing his talents, and of operating on the ſubjects around him, all ſituations are equally natural. If we are told, That vice, at leaſt, is contrary to nature; we may anſwer, It is worſe; it is folly and wretchedneſs. But if nature is only oppoſed to art, in what ſituation of the human race are the footſteps of art unknown? In the condition of the ſavage, as well as in that of the citizen, are many proofs of human invention; and in either is not in any permanent ſtation, but a mere ſtage through which this travelling being is deſtined to paſs. If the palace be unnatural, the cottage is ſo no leſs; and the higheſt refinements of political and moral apprehenſion, are not more artificial in their kind, than the firſt operations of ſentiment and reaſon.

If we admit that man is ſuſceptible of improvement, and has in himſelf a principle of progreſſion, and a deſire of perfection, it appears improper to ſay, that he has quitted the ſtate of his nature, when he has begun to proceed; or that he finds a ſtation for which he was not intended, while, like other animals, he only follows the diſpoſition, and employs the powers that nature has given.

The lateſt efforts of human invention are but a continuation of certain devices which were practiſed in the earlieſt ages of the world, and in the rudeſt ſtate of mankind. What the ſavage projects,

jects, or obſerves, in the foreſt, are the ſteps which led nations, more advanced, from the architecture of the cottage to that of the palace, and conducted the human mind from the perceptions of ſenſe, to the general concluſions of ſcience.

ACKNOWLEDGED defects are to man in every condition matter of diſlike. Ignorance and imbecility are objects of contempt: penetration and conduct give eminence, and procure eſteem. Whither ſhould his feelings and apprehenſions on theſe ſubjects lead him? To a progreſs, no doubt, in which the ſavage, as well as the philoſopher, is engaged; in which they have made different advances, but in which their ends are the ſame. The admiration which Cicero entertained for literature, eloquence, and civil accompliſhments, was not more real than that of a Scythian for ſuch a meaſure of ſimilar endowments as his own apprehenſion could reach. "Were I to boaſt," ſays a Tartar prince*, "it would be of that wiſdom I have received from "God. For as, on the one hand, I yield to none "in the conduct of war, in the diſpoſition of armies, whether of horſe or of foot, and in directing the movements of great or ſmall bodies; ſo, "on the other, I have my talent in writing, inferior perhaps only to thoſe who inhabit the great "cities of Perſia or India. Of other nations, unknown to me, I do not ſpeak."

* Abulgaze Bahadur Chan.; Hiſtory of the Tartars.

MAN may miſtake the objects of his purſuit; he may miſapply his induſtry, and miſplace his improvements. If under a ſenſe of ſuch poſſible errors, he would find a ſtandard by which to judge of his own proceedings, and arrive at the beſt ſtate of his nature, he cannot find it perhaps in the practice of any individual, or of any nation whatever; not even in the ſenſe of the majority, or the prevailing opinion of his kind. He muſt look for it in the beſt conceptions of his underſtanding, in the beſt movements of his heart; he muſt thence diſcover what is the perfection and the happineſs of which he is capable. He will find, on the ſcrutiny, that the proper ſtate of his nature, taken in this ſenſe, is not a condition from which mankind are for ever removed, but one to which they may now attain; not prior to the exerciſe of their faculties, but procured by their juſt application.

OF all the terms that we employ in treating of human affairs, thoſe of *natural* and *unnatural* are the leaſt determinate in their meaning. Oppoſed to affectation, frowardneſs, or any other defect of the temper or character, the natural is an epithet of praiſe; but employed to ſpecify a conduct which proceeds from the nature of man, can ſerve to diſtinguiſh nothing: for all the actions of men are equally the reſult of their nature. At moſt this language can only refer to the general and prevailing ſenſe or practice of mankind; and the purpoſe of every important inquiry on this ſubject may be ſerved

ſerved by the uſe of a language equally familiar and more preciſe. What is juſt, or unjuſt? What is happy or wretched, in the manners of men? What in their various ſituations, is favourable or adverſe to their amiable qualities? are queſtions to which we may expect a ſatisfactory anſwer; and whatever may have been the original ſtate of our ſpecies, it is of more importance to know the condition to which we ourſelves ſhould aſpire, than that which our anceſtors may be ſuppoſed to have left.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

Of the Principles of Self-preservation.

IF in human nature there are qualities by which it is diſtinguiſhed from every other part of the animal creation, this nature itſelf is in different climates and in different ages greatly diverſified. The varieties merit our attention, and the courſe of every ſtream into which this mighty current divides, deſerves to be followed to its ſource. It appears neceſſary, however, that we attend to the univerſal qualities of our nature, before we regard its varieties, or attempt to explain differences conſiſting in the unequal poſſeſſion or application of diſpoſitions and powers that are in ſome meaſure common to all mankind.

MAN, like the other animals, has certain inſtinctive propenſities, which, prior to the perception of pleaſure or pain, and prior to the experience of what is pernicious or uſeful, lead him to perform many functions which terminate in himſelf, or have a relation to his fellow-creatures. He has one ſet of diſpoſitions which tend to his animal preſervation, and to the continuance of his race; another which lead to ſociety, and by inliſting him on the ſide of one tribe or community, frequently engage him in war and contention with the reſt of mankind. His powers of diſcernment,

or his intellectual faculties, which, under the appellation of *reason*, are distinguished from the analogous endowments of other animals, refer to the objects around him, either as they are subjects of mere knowledge, or as they are subjects of approbation or censure. He is formed not only to know, but likewise to admire and to contemn; and these proceedings of his mind have a principal reference to his own character, and to that of his fellow-creatures, as being the subjects on which he is chiefly concerned to distinguish what is right from what is wrong. He enjoys his felicity likewise on certain fixed and determinate conditions; and either as an individual apart, or as a member of civil society, must take a particular course, in order to reap the advantages of his nature. He is, withal, in a very high degree susceptible of habits; and can, by forbearance or exercise, so far weaken, confirm, or even diversify his talents, and his dispositions, as to appear, in a great measure, the arbiter of his own rank in nature, and the author of all the varieties which are exhibited in the actual history of his species. The universal characteristics, in the mean time, to which we have now referred, must, when we would treat of any part of this history, constitute the first subject of our attention; and they require not only to be enumerated, but to be distinctly considered.

THE dispositions which tend to the preservation of the individual, while they continue to operate

in

in the manner of inſtinctive deſires, are nearly the ſame in man that they are in the other animals: But in him they are ſooner or later combined with reflection and foreſight; they give riſe to his apprehenſions on the ſubject of property, and make him acquainted with that object of care which he calls his intereſt. Without the inſtincts which teach the beaver and the ſquirrel, the ant and the bee, to make up their little hoards for winter, at firſt improvident, and, where no immediate object of paſſion is near, addicted to ſloth, he becomes, in proceſs of time, the great ſtoremaſter among animals. He finds in a proviſion of wealth, which he is probably never to employ, an object of his greateſt ſolicitude, and the principal idol of his mind. He apprehends a relation between his perſon and his property, which renders what he calls his own in a manner a part of himſelf, a conſtituent of his rank, his condition, and his character, in which, independent of any real enjoyment, he may be fortunate or unhappy; and, independent of any perſonal merit, he may be an object of conſideration or neglect; and in which he may be wounded and injured, while his perſon is ſafe, and every want of his nature is completely ſupplied.

In theſe apprehenſions, while other paſſions only operate occaſionally, the intereſted find the object of their ordinary cares; their motive to the practice of mechanic and commercial arts; their

temptation

temptation to trefpafs on the laws of juftice; and, when extremely corrupted, the price of their proftitutions, and the ftandard of their opinions on the fubject of good and of evil. Under this influence, they would enter, if not reftrained by the laws of civil fociety, on a fcene of violence or meannefs, which would exhibit our fpecies, by turns, under an afpect more terrible and odious, or more vile and contemptible, than that of any animal which inherits the earth.

ALTHOUGH the confideration of intereft is founded on the experience of animal wants and defires, its object is not to gratify any particular appetite, but to fecure the means of gratifying all; and it impofes frequently a reftraint on the very defires from which it arofe, more powerful and more fevere than thofe of religion or duty. It arifes from the principles of felf-prefervation in the human frame; but is a corruption, or at leaft a partial refult, of thofe principles, and is upon many accounts very improperly termed *felf-love.*

LOVE is an affection which carries the attention of the mind beyond itfelf, and is the fenfe of a relation to fome fellow-creature as to its object. Being a complacency and a continued fatisfaction in this object, it has, independent of any external event, and in the midft of difappointment and forrow, pleafures and triumphs unknown to thofe who are guided by mere confiderations of intereft; in every change of condition,

condition, it continues entirely diſtinct from the ſentiments which we feel on the ſubject of perſonal ſucceſs or adverſity. But as the care a man entertains for his own intereſt, and the attention his affection makes him pay to that of another, may have ſimilar effects, the one on his own fortune, the other on that of his friend, we confound the principles from which he acts; we ſuppoſe that they are the ſame in kind, only referred to different objects; and we not only miſapply the name of love, in conjunction with ſelf, but, in a manner tending to degrade our nature, we limit the aim of this ſuppoſed ſelfiſh affection to the ſecuring or accumulating the conſtituents of intereſt, or the means of mere animal life.

It is ſomewhat remarkable, that notwithſtanding men value themſelves ſo much on qualities of the mind, on parts, learning and wit, on courage, generoſity, and honour, thoſe men are ſtill ſuppoſed to be in the higheſt degree ſelfiſh or attentive to themſelves, who are moſt careful of animal life, and who are leaſt mindful of rendering that life an object worthy of care. It will be difficult, however, to tell why a good underſtanding, a reſolute and generous mind, ſhould not, by every man in his ſenſes, be reckoned as much parts of himſelf, as either his ſtomach or his palate, and much more than his eſtate or his dreſs. The epicure, who conſults his phyſician, how he may reſtore his reliſh for food, and by creating an appetite, renew his enjoyment,

enjoyment, might at leaſt with an equal regard to himſelf, conſult how he might ſtrengthen his affection to a parent or a child, to his country or to mankind; and it is probable that an appetite of this ſort would prove a ſource of enjoyment not leſs than the former.

By our ſuppoſed ſelfiſh maxims, notwithſtanding, we generally exclude from among the objects of our perſonal cares, many of the happier and more reſpectable qualities of human nature. We conſider affection and courage as mere follies, that lead us to neglect or expoſe ourſelves; we make wiſdom conſiſt in a regard to our intereſt; and without explaining what intereſt means, we would have it underſtood as the only reaſonable motive of action with mankind. There is even a ſyſtem of philoſophy founded upon tenets of this ſort, and ſuch is our opinion of what men are likely to do upon ſelfiſh principles, that we think it muſt have a tendency very dangerous to virtue. But the errors of this ſyſtem do not conſiſt ſo much in general principles, as in their particular applications; not ſo much in teaching men to regard themſelves, as in leading them to forget, that their happieſt affections, their candour, and their independence of mind, are in reality parts of themſelves. And the adverſaries of this ſuppoſed ſelfiſh philoſophy, where it makes ſelf-love the ruling paſſion with mankind, have had reaſon to find fault, not ſo much with its general repreſentations of human nature, as with the obtruſion

of

of a mere innovation in language for a discovery in science.

When the vulgar speak of their different motives, they are satisfied with ordinary names, which refer to known and obvious distinctions. Of this kind are the terms *benevolence* and *selfishness*, by the first of which they express their friendly affections, and by the second their interest. The speculative are not always satisfied with this proceeding; they would analyze, as well as enumerate the principles of nature; and the chance is, that, merely to gain the appearance of something new, without any prospect of real advantage, they will attempt to change the application of words. In the case before us, they have actually found, that benevolence is no more than a species of self-love; and would oblige us, if possible, to look out for a new set of names, by which we may distinguish the selfishness of the parent when he takes care of his child, from his selfishness when he only takes care of himself. For, according to this philosophy, as in both cases he only means to gratify a desire of his own, he is in both cases equally selfish. The term *benevolent*, in the mean time, is not employed to characterise persons who have no desires of their own, but persons whose own desires prompt them to procure the welfare of others. The fact is, that we should need only a fresh supply of language, instead of that which by this seeming discovery we should have lost, in order to make our reasonings proceed as they formerly did. But it is certainly impossible to live

and

and to act with men, without employing different names to distinguish the humane from the cruel, and the benevolent from the selfish.

These terms have their equivalents in every tongue; they were invented by men of no refinement, who only meant to express what they distinctly perceived, or strongly felt. And if a man of speculation should prove, that we are selfish in a sense of his own, it does not follow that we are so in the sense of the vulgar; or, as ordinary men would understand his conclusion, that we are condemned in every instance to act on motives of interest, covetousness, pusillanimity, and cowardice; for such is conceived to be the ordinary import of selfishness in the character of man.

An affection or passion of any kind is sometimes said to give us an interest in its object; and humanity itself gives an interest in the welfare of mankind. This term *interest*, which commonly implies little more than our property, is sometimes put for utility in general, and this for happiness; insomuch, that, under these ambiguities, it is not surprising we are still unable to determine, whether interest is the only motive of human action, and the standard by which to distinguish our good from our ill.

So much is said in this place, not from a desire to partake in any such controversy, but merely

ly to confine the meaning of the term *interest* to its most common acceptation, and to intimate a design to employ it in expressing those objects of care which refer to our external condition, and the preservation of our animal nature. When taken in this sense, it will not surely be thought to comprehend at once all the motives of human conduct. If men be not allowed to have disinterested benevolence, they will not be denied to have disinterested passions of another kind. Hatred, indignation, and rage, frequently urge them to act in opposition to their known interest, and even to hazard their lives, without any hopes of compensation in any future returns of preferment or profit.

SECT. III.

Of the principles of Union among Mankind.

MANKIND have always wandered or ſettled, agreed or quarrelled, in troops and companies. The cauſe of their aſſembling, whatever it be, is the principle of their alliance or union.

IN collecting the materials of hiſtory, we are ſeldom willing to put up with our ſubject merely as we find it. We are loth to be embarraſſed with a multiplicity of particulars, and apparent inconſiſtencies. In theory we profeſs the inveſtigation of general principles; and in order to bring the matter of our inquiries within the reach of our comprehenſion, are diſpoſed to adopt any ſyſtem. Thus, in treating of human affairs, we would draw every conſequence from a principle of union, or a principle of diſſenſion. The ſtate of nature is a ſtate of war or of amity, and men are made to unite from a principle of affection, or from a principle of fear, as is moſt ſuitable to the ſyſtem of different writers. The hiſtory of our ſpecies indeed abundantly ſhews, that they are to one another mutual objects both of fear and of love; and they who would prove them to have been originally either in a ſtate of alliance, or of war, have arguments in ſtore to maintain their aſſertions. Our attachment to one diviſion, or to one ſect, ſeems

ſeems often to derive much of its force from an animoſity conceived to an oppoſite one: And this animoſity in its turn, as often ariſes from a zeal in behalf of the ſide we eſpouſe, and from a deſire to vindicate the rights of our party.

"Man is born in ſociety," ſays Monteſquieu, "and there he remains." The charms that detain him are known to be manifold. Together with the parental affection, which, inſtead of deſerting the adult, as among the brutes, embraces more cloſe, as it becomes mixed with eſteem, and the memory of its early effects; we may reckon a propenſity common to man and other animals, to mix with the herd, and, without reflection, to follow the croud of his ſpecies. What this propenſity was in the firſt moment of its operation, we know not; but with men accuſtomed to company, its enjoyments and diſappointments are reckoned among the principal pleaſures or pains of human life. Sadneſs and melancholy are connected with ſolitude; gladneſs and pleaſure with the concourſe of men. The track of a Laplander on the ſnowy ſhore, gives joy to the lonely mariner; and the mute ſigns of cordiality and kindneſs which are made to him, awaken the memory of pleaſures which he felt in ſociety. In fine, ſays the writer of a voyage to the north, after deſcribing a mute ſcene of this ſort, "We were extremely pleaſed to "converſe with men, ſince in thirteen months we

"had

"had feen no human creature*." But we need no remote obfervation to confirm this pofition: The wailings of the infant, and the languors of the adult, when alone; the lively joys of the one, and the chearfulnefs of the other, upon the return of company, are a fufficient proof of its folid foundations in the frame of our nature.

In accounting for actions we often forget that we ourfelves have acted; and inftead of the fentiments which ftimulate the mind in the prefence of its object, we affign as the motives of conduct with men, thofe confiderations which occur in the hours of retirement and cold reflection. In this mood frequently we can find nothing important, befides the deliberate profpects of intereft; and a great work, like that of forming fociety, muft in our apprehenfion arife from deep reflections, and be carried on with a view to the advantages which mankind derive from commerce and mutual fupport. But neither a propenfity to mix with the herd, nor the fenfe of advantages enjoyed in that condition, comprehend all the principles by which men are united together. Thofe bands are even of a feeble texture, when compared to the refolute ardour with which a man adheres to his friend, or to his tribe, after they have for fome time run the career of fortune together. Mutual difcoveries of generofity, joint trials of fortitude, redouble the

* Collection of Dutch voyages.

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ardours of friendſhip, and kindle a flame in the human breaſt, which the conſiderations of perſonal intereſt or ſafety cannot ſuppreſs. The moſt lively tranſports of joy are ſeen, and the loudeſt ſhrieks of deſpair are heard, when the objects of a tender affection are beheld in a ſtate of triumph or of ſuffering. An Indian recovered his friend unexpectedly on the iſland of Juan Fernandes: He proſtrated himſelf on the ground, at his feet: "We "ſtood gazing in ſilence," ſays Dampier, "at "this tender ſcene." If we would know what is the religion of a wild American, what it is in his heart that moſt reſembles devotion: it is not his fear of the ſorcerer, nor his hope of protection from the ſpirits of the air or the wood; it is the ardent affection with which he ſelects and embraces his friend; with which he clings to his ſide in every ſeaſon of peril; and with which he invokes his ſpirit from a diſtance, when dangers ſurpriſe him alone *. Whatever proofs we may have of the ſocial diſpoſition of man in familiar and contiguous ſcenes, it is poſſibly of importance, to draw our obſervations from the examples of men who live in the ſimpleſt condition, and who have not learned to affect what they do not actually feel.

Mere acquaintance and habitude nouriſh affection, and the experience of ſociety brings every paſſion of the human mind upon its ſide. Its triumphs and proſperities, its calamities and diſtreſſes,

* Charlevoix; Hiſt. of Canada.

bring

bring a variety and a force of emotion, which can only have place in the company of our fellow-creatures. It is here that a man is made to forget his weaknefs, his cares of fafety, and his fubfiftence; and to act from thofe paffions which make him difcover his force. It is here he finds that his arrows fly fwifter than the eagle, and his weapons wound deeper than the paw of the lion, or the tooth of the boar. It is not alone his fenfe of a fupport which is near, nor the love of diftinction in the opinion of his tribe, that infpire his courage, or fwell his heart with a confidence that exceeds what his natural force fhould beftow. Vehement paffions of animofity or attachment are the firft exertions of vigour in his breaft; under their influence, every confideration, but that of his object, is forgotten; dangers and difficulties only excite him the more.

That condition is furely favourable to the nature of any being, in which his force is increafed; and if courage be the gift of fociety to man, we have reafon to confider his union with his fpecies as the nobleft part of his fortune. From this fource are derived, not only the force, but the very exiftence of his happieft emotions; not only the better part, but almoft the whole of his rational character. Send him to the defert alone, he is a plant torn from its roots: the form indeed may remain, but every faculty droops and withers; the human perfonage and the human character ceafe to exift.

Men are so far from valuing society on account of its mere external conveniencies, that they are commonly most attached where those conveniencies are least frequent; and are there most faithful, where the tribute of their allegiance is paid in blood. Affection operates with the greatest force, where it meets with the greatest difficulties: In the breast of the parent, it is most solicitous amidst the dangers and distresses of the child: In the breast of a man, its flame redoubles where the wrongs or sufferings of his friend, or his country, require his aid. It is, in short, from this principle alone that we can account for the obstinate attachment of a savage to his unsettled and defenceless tribe, when temptations on the side of ease and of safety might induce him to fly from famine and danger, to a station more affluent, and more secure. Hence the sanguine affection which every Greek bore to his country, and hence the devoted patriotism of an early Roman. Let those examples be compared with the spirit which reigns in a commercial state, where men may be supposed to have experienced, in its full extent, the interest which individuals have in the preservation of their country. It is here indeed, if ever, that man is sometimes found a detached and a solitary being: he has found an object which sets him in competition with his fellow-creatures, and he deals with them as he does with his cattle and his soil, for the sake of the profits they bring. The mighty engine which we suppose to have formed society, only tends to set its members at variance, or to continue their intercourse after the bands of affection are broken.

SECT. IV.

Of the principles of War and Dissension.

"THERE are some circumstances in the lot "of mankind," says Socrates, "that shew "them to be destined to friendship and amity: "Those are, their mutual need of each other; "their mutual compassion; their sense of mutual "benefits; and the pleasures arising in company. "There are other circumstances which prompt "them to war and dissension; the admiration and "the desire which they entertain for the same sub-"jects; their opposite pretensions; and the pro-"vocations which they mutually offer in the course "of their competitions."

WHEN we endeavour to apply the maxims of natural justice to the solution of difficult questions, we find that some cases may be supposed, and actually happen, where oppositions take place, and are lawful, prior to any provocation, or act of injustice; that where the safety and preservation of numbers are mutually inconsistent, one party may employ his right of defence, before the other has begun an attack. And when we join with such examples, the instances of mistake, and misunderstanding, to which mankind are exposed, we may be satisfied that war does not always proceed from an intention to injure; and that even the best qua-

lities of men, their candour, as well as their resolution, may operate in the midst of their quarrels.

There is still more to be observed on this subject. Mankind not only find in their condition the sources of variance and dissension; they appear to have in their minds the seeds of animosity, and to embrace the occasions of mutual opposition, with alacrity and pleasure. In the most pacific situation, there are few who have not their enemies, as well as their friends; and who are not pleased with opposing the proceedings of one, as much as with favouring the designs of another. Small and simple tribes, who in their domestic society have the firmest union, are in their state of opposition as separate nations, frequently animated with the most implacable hatred. Among the citizens of Rome, in the early ages of that republic, the name of a foreigner, and that of an enemy, were the same. Among the Greeks, the name of Barbarian, under which that people comprehended every nation that was of a race, and spoke a language, different from their own, became a term of indiscriminate contempt and aversion. Even where no particular claim to superiority is formed, the repugnance to union, the frequent wars, or rather the perpetual hostilities which take place among rude nations and separate clans, discover how much our species is disposed to opposition, as well as to concert.

LATE difcoveries have brought to our knowledge almoft every fituation in which mankind are placed. We have found them fpread over large and extenfive continents, where communications are open, and where national confederacy might be eafily formed. We have found them in narrower diftricts, circumfcribed by mountains, great rivers, and arms of the fea. They have been found in fmall iflands, where the inhabitants might be eafily affembled, and derive an advantage from their union. But in all thofe fituations, alike, they were broke into cantons, and affected a diftinction of name and community. The titles of *fellow-citizen* and *countryman*, unoppofed to thofe of *alien* and *foreigner*, to which they refer, would fall into difufe, and lofe their meaning. We love individuals on account of perfonal qualities; but we love our country, as it is a party in the divifions of mankind; and our zeal for its intereft, is a predilection in behalf of the fide we maintain.

IN the promifcuous concourfe of men, it is fufficient that we have an opportunity of felecting our company. We turn away from thofe who do not engage us, and we fix our refort where the fociety is more to our mind. We are fond of diftinctions; we place ourfelves in oppofition, and quarrel under the denominations of faction and party, without any material fubject of controverfy. Averfion, like affection, is foftered by a continued direction to its particular object. Separation and eftrangement, as well

well as opposition, widen a breach which did not owe its beginnings to any offence. And it would seem, that till we have reduced mankind to the state of a family, or found some external consideration to maintain their connection in greater numbers, they will be for ever separated into bands, and form a plurality of nations.

The sense of a common danger, and the assaults of an enemy, have been frequently useful to nations, by uniting their members more firmly together, and by preventing the secessions and actual separations in which their civil discord might otherwise terminate. And this motive to union which is offered from abroad, may be necessary, not only in the case of large and extensive nations, where coalitions are weakened by distance, and the distinction of provincial names; but even in the narrow society of the smallest states. Rome itself was founded by a small party, which took its flight from Alba; her citizens were often in danger of separating; and if the villages and cantons of the Volsci had been further removed from the scene of their dissensions, the Mons Sacer might have received a new colony before the mother-country was ripe for such a discharge. She continued long to feel the quarrels of her nobles and her people; and kept open the gates of Janus, to remind those parties of the duties they owed to their country.

SOCIETIES, as well as individuals, being charged with the care of their own preservation, and having separate interests, which give rise to jealousies and competitions, we cannot be surprized to find hostilities arise from this source. But were there no angry passions of a different sort, the animosities which attend an opposition of interest, should bear a proportion to the supposed value of the subject. "The Hottentot nations," says Kolben, "trespass on each other by thefts of cattle and of "women; but such injuries are seldom committed, "except with a view to exasperate their neigh-"bours, and bring them to a war." Such depredations, then, are not the foundation of a war, but the effects of a hostile intention already conceived. The nations of North America, who have no herds to preserve, nor settlements to defend, are yet engaged in almost perpetual wars, for which they can assign no reason, but the point of honour, and a desire to continue the struggle their fathers maintained. They do not regard the spoils of an enemy; and the warrior who has seized any booty, easily parts with it to the first person who comes in his way*.

BUT we need not cross the Atlantic to find proofs of animosity, and to observe, in the collision of separate societies, the influence of angry passions, that do not arise from an opposition of interest.

* See Charlevoix's History of Canada.

Human

Human nature has no part of its character of which more flagrant examples are given on this side of the globe. What is it that stirs in the breasts of ordinary men when the enemies of their country are named? Whence are the prejudices that subsist between different provinces, cantons, and villages, of the same empire and territory? What is it that excites one half of the nations of Europe against the other? The statesman may explain his conduct on motives of national jealousy and caution, but the people have dislikes and antipathies, for which they cannot account. Their mutual reproaches of perfidy and injustice, like the Hottentot depredations, are but symptoms of an animosity, and the language of a hostile disposition, already conceived. The charge of cowardice and pusillanimity, qualities which the interested and cautious enemy should, of all others, like best to find in his rival, is urged with aversion, and made the ground of dislike. Hear the peasants on different sides of the Alps, and the Pyrenees, the Rhine, or the British channel, give vent to their prejudices and national passions; it is among them that we find the materials of war and dissension laid without the direction of government, and sparks ready to kindle into a flame, which the statesman is frequently disposed to extinguish. The fire will not always catch where his reasons of state would direct, nor stop where the concurrence of interest has produced an alliance. "My father," said a Spanish peasant, "would rise from his

"grave

"grave, if he could foresee a war with France." What interest had he, or the bones of his father, in the quarrels of princes?

These observations seem to arraign our species, and to give an unfavourable picture of mankind; and yet the particulars we have mentioned are consistent with the most amiable qualities of our nature, and often furnish a scene for the exercise of our greatest abilities. They are sentiments of generosity and self-denial that animate the warrior in defence of his country; and they are dispositions most favourable to mankind, that become the principles of apparent hostility to men. Every animal is made to delight in the exercise of his natural talents and forces: The lion and the tyger sport with the paw; the horse delights to commit his mane to the wind, and forgets his pasture to try his speed in the field; the bull even before his brow is armed, and the lamb while yet an emblem of innocence, have a disposition to strike with the forehead, and anticipate, in play, the conflicts they are doomed to sustain. Man too is disposed to opposition, and to employ the forces of his nature against an equal antagonist; he loves to bring his reason, his eloquence, his courage, even his bodily strength to the proof. His sports are frequently an image of war; sweat and blood are freely expended in play; and fractures or death are often made to terminate the pastime of idleness and festivity. He was not made to live for ever, and even

even his love of amusement has opened a way to the grave.

Without the rivalship of nations, and the practice of war, civil society itself could scarcely have found an object, or a form. Mankind might have traded without any formal convention, but they cannot be safe without a national concert. The necessity of a public defence, has given rise to many departments of state, and the intellectual talents of men have found their busiest scene in wielding their national forces. To overawe, or intimidate, or, when we cannot persuade with reason, to resist with fortitude, are the occupations which give its most animating exercise, and its greatest triumphs, to a vigorous mind; and he who has never struggled with his fellow-creatures, is a stranger to half the sentiments of mankind.

The quarrels of individuals, indeed, are frequently the operations of unhappy and detestable passions; malice, hatred, and rage. If such passions alone possess the breast, the scene of dissension becomes an object of horror; but a common opposition maintained by numbers, is always allayed by passions of another sort. Sentiments of affection and friendship mix with animosity; the active and strenuous become the guardians of their society; and violence itself is, in their case, an exertion of generosity, as well as of courage. We applaud, as proceeding from a national or party spirit,

ſpirit, what we could not endure as the effect of a private diſlike; and amidſt the competitions of rival ſtates, think we have found, for the patriot and the warrior, in the practice of violence and ſtratagem, the moſt illuſtrious career of human virtue. Even perſonal oppoſition here does not divide our judgment on the merits of men. The rival names of Ageſilaus and Epaminondas, of Scipio and Hannibal, are repeated with equal praiſe; and war itſelf, which in one view appears ſo fatal, in another is the exerciſe of a liberal ſpirit; and in the very effects which we regret, is but one diſtemper more by which the author of nature has appointed our exit from human life.

THESE reflections may open our view into the ſtate of mankind; but they tend to reconcile us to the conduct of Providence, rather than to make us change our own: where, from a regard to the welfare of our fellow-creatures, we endeavour to pacify their animoſities, and unite them by the ties of affection. In the purſuit of this amiable intention, we may hope, in ſome inſtances, to diſarm the angry paſſions of jealouſy and envy; we may hope to inſtil into the breaſts of private men ſentiments of candour toward their fellow-creatures, and a diſpoſition to humanity and juſtice. But it is vain to expect that we can give to the multitude of a people a ſenſe of union among themſelves, without admitting hoſtility to thoſe who oppoſe them. Could we at once, in the caſe of any nation,

tion, extinguish the emulation which is excited from abroad, we should probably break or weaken the bands of society at home, and close the busiest scenes of national occupations and virtues.

SECT. V.

Of Intellectual Powers.

MANY attempts have been made to analyse the dispositions which we have now enumerated; but one purpose of science, perhaps the most important, is served, when the existence of a disposition is established. We are more concerned in its reality, and in its consequences, than we are in its origin, or manner of formation.

THE same observation may be applied to the other powers and faculties of our nature. Their existence and use are the principal objects of our study. Thinking and reasoning, we say, are the operations of some faculty; but in what manner the faculties of thought or reason remain, when they are not exerted, or by what difference in the frame they are unequal in different persons, are questions which we cannot resolve. Their operations alone discover them: When unapplied, they lye hid even from the person to whom they pertain; and their action is so much a part of their nature, that the faculty itself, in many cases, is scarcely to be distinguished from a habit acquired in its frequent exertion.

PERSONS who are occupied with different subjects, who act in different scenes, generally appear

to have different talents, or at least to have the same faculties variously formed, and suited to different purposes. The peculiar genius of nations, as well as of individuals, may in this manner arise from the state of their fortunes. And it is proper that we endeavour to find some rule, by which to judge of what is admirable in the capacities of men, or fortunate in the application of their faculties, before we venture to pass a judgment on this branch of their merits, or pretend to measure the degree of respect they may claim by their different attainments.

To receive the informations of sense, is perhaps the earliest function of an animal combined with an intellectual nature; and one great accomplishment of the living agent consists in the force and sensibility of his animal organs. The pleasures or pains to which he is exposed from this quarter, constitute to him an important difference between the objects which are thus brought to his knowledge; and it concerns him to distinguish well, before he commits himself to the direction of appetite. He must scrutinize the objects of one sense by the perceptions of another; examine with the eye, before he ventures to touch; and employ every means of observation, before he gratifies the appetites of thirst and of hunger. A discernment acquired by experience, becomes a faculty of his mind; and the inferences of thought are sometimes not to be distinguished from the perceptions of sense.

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The objects around us, beside their separate appearances, have their relations to each other. They suggest, when compared, what would not occur when they are considered apart; they have their effects, and mutual influences; they exhibit, in like circumstances, similar operations, and uniform consequences. When we have found and expressed the points in which the uniformity of their operations consists, we have ascertained a physical law. Many such laws, and even the most important, are known to the vulgar, and occur upon the smallest degrees of reflection: But others are hid under a seeming confusion, which ordinary talents cannot remove; and are therefore the objects of study, long observation, and superior capacity. The faculties of penetration and judgment, are, by men of business, as well as of science, employed to unravel intricacies of this sort; and the degree of sagacity with which either is endowed, is to be measured by the success with which they are able to find general rules, applicable to a variety of cases that seemed to have nothing in common, and to discover important distinctions between subjects which the vulgar are apt to confound.

To collect a multiplicity of particulars under general heads, and to refer a variety of operations to their common principle, is the object of science. To do the same thing, at least within the range of his active engagements, is requisite to the man of pleasure, or business: And it would seem, that the studious

ſtudious and the active are ſo far employed in the ſame taſk, from obſervation and experience, to find the general views under which their objects may be conſidered, and the rules which may be uſefully applied in the detail of their conduct. They do not always apply their talents to different ſubjects; and they ſeem to be diſtinguiſhed chiefly by the unequal reach and variety of their remarks, or by the intentions which they ſeverally have in collecting them.

Whilst men continue to act from appetites and paſſions, leading to the attainment of external ends, they ſeldom quit the view of their objects in detail, to go far in the road of general inquiries. They meaſure the extent of their own abilities, by the promptitude with which they apprehend what is important in every ſubject, and the facility with which they extricate themſelves on every trying occaſion. And theſe, it muſt be confeſſed, to a being who is deſtined to act in the midſt of difficulties, are the proper teſt of capacity and force. The parade of words, and general reaſonings, which ſometimes carry an appearance of ſo much learning and knowledge, are of little avail in the conduct of life. The talents from which they proceed, terminate in mere oſtentation, and are ſeldom connected with that ſuperior diſcernment which the active apply in times of perplexity; much leſs with that intrepidity and force of mind which are required in paſſing through difficult ſcenes.

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The abilities of active men, however, have a variety correſponding to that of the ſubjects on which they are occupied. A ſagacity applied to external and inanimate nature, forms one ſpecies of capacity; that which is turned to ſociety and human affairs, another. Reputation for parts in any ſcene is equivocal, till we know by what kind of exertion that reputation is gained. No more can be ſaid, in commending men of the greateſt abilities, than that they underſtand well the ſubjects to which they have applied: And every department, every profeſſion, would have its great men, if there were not a choice of objects for the underſtanding, and of talents for the mind, as well as of ſentiments for the heart, and of habits for the active character.

The meaneſt profeſſions, indeed, ſo far ſometimes forget themſelves, or the reſt of mankind, as to arrogate, in commending what is diſtinguiſhed in their own way, every epithet the moſt reſpectable claim as the right of ſuperior abilities. Every mechanic is a great man with the learner, and the humble admirer, in his particular calling; and we can, perhaps, with more aſſurance pronounce what it is that ſhould make a man happy and amiable, than what ſhould make his abilities reſpected, and his genius admired. This, upon a view of the talents themſelves, may perhaps be impoſſible. The effect, however, will point out the rule and the ſtandard of our judgment. To be admired and reſpected, is to have an aſcendant among men.

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The talents which most directly procure that ascendant, are those which operate on mankind, penetrate their views, prevent their wishes, or frustrate their designs. The superior capacity leads with a superior energy, where every individual would go, and shews the hesitating and irresolute a clear passage to the attainment of their ends.

This description does not pertain to any particular craft or profession; or perhaps it implies a kind of ability, which the separate application of men to particular callings, only tends to suppress or to weaken. Where shall we find the talents which are fit to act with men in a collective body, if we break that body into parts, and confine the observation of each to a separate track?

To act in the view of his fellow-creatures, to produce his mind in public, to give it all the exercise of sentiment and thought, which pertain to man as a member of society, as a friend, or an enemy, seems to be the principal calling and occupation of his nature. If he must labour, that he may subsist, he can subsist for no better purpose than the good of mankind; nor can he have better talents than those which qualify him to act with men. Here, indeed, the understanding appears to borrow very much from the passions; and there is a felicity of conduct in human affairs, in which it is difficult to distinguish the promptitude of the head from the ardour and sensibility of the heart. Where both

both are united, they conſtitute that ſuperiority of mind, the frequency of which among men, in particular ages and nations, much more than the progreſs they have made in ſpeculation, or in the practice of mechanic and liberal arts, ſhould determine the rate of their genius, and aſſign the palm of diſtinction and honour.

WHEN nations ſucceed one another in the career of diſcoveries and inquiries, the laſt is always the moſt knowing. Syſtems of ſcience are gradually formed. The globe itſelf is traverſed by degrees, and the hiſtory of every age, when paſt, is an acceſſion of knowledge to thoſe who ſucceed. The Romans were more knowing than the Greeks; and every ſcholar of modern Europe is, in this ſenſe, more learned than the moſt accompliſhed perſon that ever bore either of thoſe celebrated names. But is he on that account their ſuperior?

MEN are to be eſtimated, not from what they know, but from what they are able to perform; from their ſkill in adapting materials to the ſeveral purpoſes of life; from their vigour and conduct in purſuing the objects of policy, and in finding the expedients of war and national defence. Even in literature, they are to be eſtimated from the works of their genius, not from the extent of their knowledge. The ſcene of mere obſervation was extremely limited in a Grecian republic; and the buſtle of an active life appeared inconſiſtent with ſtudy: But

there the human mind, notwithſtanding, collected its greateſt abilities, and received its beſt informations, in the midſt of ſweat and of duſt.

It is peculiar to modern Europe, to reſt ſo much of the human character on what may be learned in retirement, and from the information of books. A juſt admiration of ancient literature, an opinion that human ſentiment, and human reaſon, without this aid, were to have vaniſhed from the ſocieties of men, have led us into the ſhade, where we endeavour to derive from imagination and ſtudy, what is in reality matter of experience and ſentiment: and we endeavour, through the grammar of dead languages, and the channel of commentators, to arrive at the beauties of thought and elocution, which ſprang from the animated ſpirit of ſociety, and were taken from the living impreſſions of an active life. Our attainments are frequently limited to the elements of every ſcience, and ſeldom reach to that enlargement of ability and power which uſeful knowledge ſhould give. Like mathematicians, who ſtudy the Elements of Euclid, but never think of menſuration; we read of ſocieties, but do not propoſe to act with men: we repeat the language of politics, but feel not the ſpirit of nations; we attend to the formalities of a military diſcipline, but know not how to employ numbers of men to obtain any purpoſe by ſtratagem or force.

But for what end, it may be ſaid, point out an evil that cannot be remedied? If national

affairs called for exertion, the genius of men would awake; but in the receſs of better employment, the time which is beſtowed on ſtudy, if even attended with no other advantage, ſerves to occupy with innocence the hours of leiſure, and ſet bounds to the purſuit of ruinous and frivolous amuſements. From no better reaſon than this, we employ ſo many of our early years, under the rod, to acquire, what it is not expected we ſhould retain beyond the threſhold of the ſchool; and whilſt we carry the ſame frivolous character in our ſtudies that we do in our amuſements, the human mind could not ſuffer more from a contempt of letters, than it does from the falſe importance which is given to literature, as a buſineſs for life, not as a help to our conduct, and the means of forming a character that may be happy in itſelf, and uſeful to mankind.

If that time which is paſſed in relaxing the powers of the mind, and in with-holding every object but what tends to weaken and to corrupt, were employed in fortifying thoſe powers, and in teaching the mind to recogniſe its objects, and its ſtrength, we ſhould not, at the years of maturity, be ſo much at a loſs for occupation; nor, in attending the chances of a gaming-table, miſemploy our talents, or waſte the fire which remains in the breaſt. They, at leaſt, who by their ſtations have a ſhare in the government of their country, might believe themſelves capable of buſineſs; and while

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the state had its armies and councils, might find objects enough to amuse, without throwing a personal fortune into hazard, merely to cure the yawnings of a listless and insignificant life. It is impossible for ever to maintain the tone of speculation; it is impossible not sometimes to feel that we live among men.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

Of Moral Sentiment.

UPON a flight observation of what paffes in human life, we fhould be apt to conclude, that the care of fubfiftence is the principal fpring of human actions. This confideration leads to the invention and practice of mechanical arts; it ferves to diftinguifh amufement from bufinefs; and, with many, fcarely admits into competition any other fubject of purfuit or attention. The mighty advantages of property and fortune, when ftript of the recommendations they derive from vanity, or the more ferious regards to independence and power, only mean a provifion that is made for animal enjoyment; and if our folicitude on this fubject were removed, not only the toils of the mechanic, but the ftudies of the learned, would ceafe; every department of publick bufinefs would become unneceffary; every fenate-houfe would be fhut up, and every palace deferted.

Is man therefore, in refpect to his object, to be claffed with the mere brutes, and only to be diftinguifhed by faculties that qualify him to multiply contrivances for the fupport and convenience of animal life, and by the extent of a fancy that renders the care of animal prefervation to him more burthenfome than it is to the herd with which he

fhares

interes in the bounty of nature? If this were his case, the joy which attends on succefs, or the griefs which arife from difappointment, would make the fum of his paffions. The torrent that wafted, or the inundation that enriched his poffeffions, would give him all the emotion with which he is feized, on the occafion of a wrong by which his fortunes are impaired, or of a benefit by which they are preferved and enlarged. His fellow-creatures would be confidered merely as they affected his intereft. Profit or lofs would ferve to mark the event of every tranfaction; and the epithets *ufeful* or *detrimental* would ferve to diftinguifh his mates in fociety, as they do the tree which bears plenty of fruit, from that which only cumbers the ground, or intercepts his view.

This, however, is not the hiftory of our fpecies. What comes from a fellow-creature is received with peculiar emotion; and every language abounds with terms that exprefs fomewhat in the tranfactions of men, different from fuccefs and difappointment. The bofom kindles in company, while the point of intereft in view has nothing to inflame; and a matter frivolous in itfelf, becomes important, when it ferves to bring to light the intentions and characters of men. The foreigner, who believed that Othello, on the ftage, was enraged for the lofs of his handkerchief, was not more miftaken, than the reafoner who imputes any of the more vehement paffions of men to the impreffions of mere profit or lofs.

MEN aſſemble to deliberate on buſineſs, they ſeparate from jealouſies of intereſt; but in their ſeveral colliſions, whether as friends or as enemies, a fire is ſtruck out which the regards to intereſt or ſafety cannot confine. The value of a favour is not meaſured when ſentiments of kindneſs are perceived; and the term *misfortune* has but a feeble meaning, when compared to that of *inſult* and *wrong*.

As actors or ſpectators, we are perpetually made to feel the difference of human conduct, and from a bare recital of tranſactions which have paſſed in ages and countries remote from our own, are moved with admiration and pity, or tranſported with indignation and rage. Our ſenſibility on this ſubject gives their charm in retirement, to the relations of hiſtory and to the fictions of poetry; ſends forth the tear of compaſſion, gives to the blood its briſkeſt movement, and to the eye its livelieſt glances of diſpleaſure or joy. It turns human life into an intereſting ſpectacle, and perpetually ſolicits even the indolent to mix, as opponents or friends, in the ſcenes which are acted before them. Joined to the powers of deliberation and reaſon, it conſtitutes the baſis of a moral nature; and whilſt it dictates the terms of praiſe and of blame, ſerves to claſs our fellow-creatures, by the moſt admirable and engaging, or the moſt odious and contemptible, denominations.

IT is pleaſant to find men, who in their ſpeculations, deny the reality of moral diſtinctions, forget

get in detail the general positions they maintain, and give those to ridicule, indignation, and scorn, as if any of these sentiments could have place, were the actions of men indifferent; or with acrimony pretend to detect the fraud by which moral restraints have been imposed, as if to censure a fraud were not already to take part on the side of morality*.

CAN we explain the principles upon which mankind adjudge the preference of characters, and upon which they indulge such vehement emotions of admiration or contempt? If it be admitted that we cannot, are the facts less true? or must we suspend the movements of the heart until they who are employed in framing systems of science have discovered the principle from which those movements proceed? If a finger burn, we care not for information on the properties of fire: If the heart be torn, or the mind overjoyed, we have not leisure for speculations on the subjects of moral sensibility.

IT is fortunate in this, as in other articles to which speculation and theory are applied, that nature proceeds in her course, whilst the curious are busied in the search of her principles. The peasant, or the child, can reason, and judge, and speak his language, with a discernment, a consistency, and a regard to analogy, which perplex the logician, the moralist, and the grammarian, when they would

* Mandeville.

find

find the principle upon which the proceeding is founded, or when they would bring to general rule, what is so familiar, and so well sustained in particular cases. The felicity of our conduct is more owing to the talent we possess for detail, and to the suggestion of particular occasions, than it is to any direction we can find in theory and general speculations.

We must, in the result of every inquiry, encounter with facts which we cannot explain; and to bear with this mortification would save us frequently a great deal of fruitless trouble. Together with the sense of our existence, we must admit many circumstances which come to our knowledge at the same time, and in the same manner; and which do, in reality, constitute the mode of our being. Every peasant will tell us, that a man hath his rights; and that to trespass on those rights is injustice. If we ask him farther, what he means by the term *right?* we probably force him to substitute a less significant, or less proper term, in the place of this; or require him to account for what is an original mode of his mind, and a sentiment to which he ultimately refers, when he would explain himself upon any particular application of his language.

The rights of individuals may relate to a variety of subjects, and be comprehended under different heads. Prior to the establishment of property, and the distinction of ranks, men have a right

right to defend their persons, and to act with freedom; they have a right to maintain the apprehensions of reason, and the feelings of the heart; and they cannot for a moment associate together, without feeling that the treatment they give or receive may be just or unjust. It is not, however, our business here to carry the notion of a right into its several applications, but to reason on the sentiment of favour with which that notion is entertained in the mind.

If it be true, that men are united by instinct, that they act in society from affections of kindness and friendship; if it be true, that even prior to acquaintance and habitude, men, as such, are commonly to each other objects of attention, and some degree of regard; that while their prosperity is beheld with indifference, their afflictions are considered with commiseration; if calamities be measured by the numbers and the qualities of men they involve; and if every suffering of a fellow-creature draws a croud of attentive spectators; if, even in the case of those to whom we do not habitually wish any positive good, we are still averse to be the instruments of harm; it should seem, that in these various appearances of an amicable disposition, the foundations of a moral apprehension are sufficiently laid, and the sense of a right which we maintain for ourselves, is by a movement of humanity and candour extended to our fellow-creatures.

What is it that prompts the tongue when we censure an act of cruelty or oppression? What is it that constitutes our restraint from offences that tend to distress our fellow-creatures? It is probably, in both cases, a particular application of that principle, which, in presence of the sorrowful, sends forth the tear of compassion; and a combination of all those sentiments, which constitute a benevolent disposition; and if not a resolution to do good, at least an aversion to be the instrument of harm*.

* Mankind, we are told, are devoted to interest; and this, in all commercial nations, is undoubtedly true: But it does not follow, that they are, by their natural dispositions, averse to society and mutual affection: Proofs of the contrary remain, even where interest triumphs most. What must we think of the force of that disposition to compassion, to candour, and good-will, which, notwithstanding the prevailing opinion that the happiness of a man consists in possessing the greatest possible share of riches, preferments, and honours, still keeps the parties who are in competition for those objects, on a tolerable footing of amity, and leads them to abstain even from their own supposed good, when their seizing it appears in the light of a detriment to others? What might we not expect from the human heart in circumstances which prevented this apprehension on the subject of fortune, or under the influence of an opinion as steady and general as the former, that human felicity does not consist in the indulgences of animal appetite, but in those of a benevolent heart; not in fortune or interest, but in the contempt of this very object, in the courage and freedom which arise from this contempt, joined to a resolute choice of conduct, directed to the good of mankind, or to the good of that particular society to which the party belongs?

It

It may be difficult, however, to enumerate the motives of all the cenſures and commendations which are applied to the actions of men. Even while we moralize, every diſpoſition of the human mind may have its ſhare in forming the judgment, and in prompting the tongue. As jealouſy is often the moſt watchful guardian of chaſtity, ſo malice is often the quickeſt to ſpy the failings of our neighbour. Envy, affectation, and vanity, may dictate the verdicts we give, and the worſt principles of our nature may be at the bottom of our pretended zeal for morality; but if we only mean to inquire, why they who are well diſpoſed to mankind, apprehend, in every inſtance, certain rights pertaining to their fellow-creatures, and why they applaud the conſideration that is paid to thoſe rights, we cannot aſſign a better reaſon, than that the perſon who applauds, is well diſpoſed to the welfare of the parties to whom his applauſes refer. Applauſe, however, is the expreſſion of a peculiar ſentiment; an expreſſion of eſteem the reverſe of contempt. Its object is perfection, the reverſe of defect. This ſentiment is not the love of mankind; it is that by which we eſtimate the qualities of men, and the objects of our purſuit; that which doubles the force of every deſire or averſion, when we conſider its object as tending to raiſe or to ſink our nature.

When we conſider, that the reality of any amicable propenſity in the human mind has been frequently conteſted; when we recollect the preva-
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lence of interested competitions, with their attendant passions of jealousy, envy, and malice; it may seem strange to alledge, that love and compassion are, next to the desire of elevation, the most powerful motives in the human breast: That they urge, on many occasions, with the most irresistible vehemence; and if the desire of self-preservation be more constant, and more uniform, these are a more plentiful source of enthusiasm, satisfaction, and joy. With a power, not inferior to that of resentment and rage, they hurry the mind into every sacrifice of interest, and bear it undismayed through every hardship and danger.

THE disposition on which friendship is grafted, glows with satisfaction in the hours of tranquillity, and is pleasant, not only in its triumphs, but even in its sorrows. It throws a grace on the external air, and, by its expression on the countenance, compensates for the want of beauty, or gives a charm which no complexion or features can equal. From this source the scenes of human life derive their principal felicity; and their imitations in poetry, their principal ornament. Descriptions of nature, even representations of a vigorous conduct, and a manly courage, do not engage the heart, if they be not mixed with the exhibition of generous sentiments, and the pathetic, which is found to arise in the struggles, the triumphs, or the misfortunes of a tender affection. The death of Polites, in the Æneid,

neid, is not more affecting than that of many others who perished in the ruins of Troy; but the aged Priam was present when this last of his sons was slain; and the agonies of grief and sorrow force the parent from his retreat, to fall by the hand that shed the blood of his child. The pathetic of Homer consists in exhibiting the force of affections, not in exciting mere terror and pity; passions he has never perhaps, in any instance, attempted to raise.

With this tendency to kindle into enthusiasm, with this command over the heart, with the pleasure that attends its emotions, and with all its effects in meriting confidence, and procuring esteem, it is not surprising, that a principle of humanity should give the tone to our commendations and our censures, and even where it is hindered from directing our conduct, should still give to the mind, on reflection, its knowledge of what is desirable in the human character. *What hast thou done with thy brother Abel?* was the first expostulation in behalf of morality; and if the first answer has been often repeated, mankind have notwithstanding, in one sense, sufficiently acknowledged the charge of their nature. They have felt, they have talked, and even acted, as the keepers of their fellow-creatures: They have made the indications of candour and mutual affection the test of what is meritorious and amiable in the characters of men: They have made cruelty and oppression the principal objects of their indignation

indignation and rage: Even while the head is occupied with projects of intereſt, the heart is often ſeduced into friendſhip; and while buſineſs proceeds on the maxims of ſelf-preſervation, the careleſs hour is employed in generoſity and kindneſs.

Hence the rule by which men commonly judge of external actions, is taken from the ſuppoſed influence of ſuch actions on the general good. To abſtain from harm, is the great law of natural juſtice; to diffuſe happineſs, is the law of morality; and when we cenſure the conferring a favour on one or a few at the expence of many, we refer to public utility, as the great object at which the actions of men ſhould be aimed.

After all, it muſt be confeſſed, that if a principle of affection to mankind, be the baſis of our moral approbation and diſlike, we ſometimes proceed in diſtributing applauſe or cenſure, without preciſely attending to the degree in which our fellow-creatures are hurt or obliged; and that, beſides the virtues of candour, friendſhip, generoſity, and public ſpirit, which bear an immediate reference to this principle, there are others which may ſeem to derive their commendation from a different ſource. Temperance, prudence, fortitude, are thoſe qualities likewiſe admired from a principle of regard to our fellow-creatures? Why not, ſince they render men happy in themſelves, and uſeful to others? He who is qualified to promote the welfare of mankind,

kind, is neither a ſot, a fool, nor a coward. Can it be more clearly expreſſed, that temperance, prudence, and fortitude, are neceſſary to the character we love and admire? I know well why I ſhould wiſh for them in myſelf; and why likewiſe I ſhould wiſh for them in my friend, and in every perſon who is an object of my affection. But to what purpoſe ſeek for reaſons of approbation, where qualities are ſo neceſſary to our happineſs, and ſo great a part in the perfection of our nature? We muſt ceaſe to eſteem ourſelves, and to diſtinguiſh what is excellent, when ſuch qualifications incur our neglect.

A perſon of an affectionate mind, poſſeſſed of a maxim, That he himſelf as an individual, is no more than a part of the whole that demands his regard, has found, in that principle, a ſufficient foundation for all the virtues; for a contempt of animal pleaſures, that would ſupplant his principal enjoyment; for an equal contempt of danger or pain, that come to ſtop his purſuits of public good. "A vehement and ſteady affection magnifies its "object, and leſſens every difficulty or danger that "ſtands in the way." "Aſk thoſe who have been "in love," ſays Epictetus, "they will know that "I ſpeak truth."

"I have before me," ſays another eminent moraliſt*, "an idea of juſtice, which, if I could fol-"low in every inſtance, I ſhould think myſelf the

* Perſian Letters.

"moſt

"moſt happy of men." And it is, of conſequence to their happineſs, as well as to their conduct, if thoſe can be disjoined, that men ſhould have this idea properly formed: It is perhaps but another name for that good of mankind, which the virtuous are engaged to promote. If virtue be the ſupreme good, its beſt and moſt ſignal effect is to communicate and diffuſe itſelf.

To diſtinguiſh men by the difference of their moral qualities, to eſpouſe one party from a ſenſe of juſtice, to oppoſe another even with indignation when excited by iniquity, are the common indications of probity, and the operations of an animated, upright, and generous ſpirit. To guard againſt unjuſt partialities, and ill-grounded antipathies; to maintain that compoſure of mind, which, without imparing its ſenſibility or ardour, proceeds in every inſtance with diſcernment and penetration, are the marks of a vigorous and cultivated ſpirit. To be able to follow the dictates of ſuch a ſpirit through all the varieties of human life, and with a mind always maſter of itſelf, in proſperity or adverſity, and poſſeſſed of all its abilities, when the ſubjects in hazard are life, or freedom, as much as in treating ſimple queſtions of intereſt, are the triumphs of magnanimity, and true elevation of mind. "The event of the day is decided. Draw this javelin from my body now," ſaid Epaminondas, "and let me bleed."

In what situation, or by what instruction, is this wonderful character to be formed? Is it found in the nurseries of affectation, pertness, and vanity, from which fashion is propagated, and the genteel is announced? in great and opulent cities, where men vie with each other in equipage, dress, and the reputation of fortune? Is it within the admired precincts of a court, where we may learn to smile without being pleased, to caress without affection, to wound with the secret weapons of envy and jealousy, and to rest our personal importance on circumstances which we cannot always with honour command? No: But in a situation where the great sentiments of the heart are awakened; where the characters of men, not their situations and fortunes, are the principal distinction; where the anxieties of interest, or vanity, perish in the blaze of more vigorous emotions; and where the human soul, having felt and recognised its objects, like an animal who has tasted the blood of his prey, cannot descend to pursuits that leave its talents and its force unemployed.

Proper occasions alone operating on a raised and a happy disposition, may produce this admirable effect, whilst mere instruction may always find mankind at a loss to comprehend its meaning, or insensible to its dictates. The case, however, is not desperate, till we have formed our system of politics, as well as manners; till we have sold our freedom for titles, equipage, and distinctions; till we see no merit but prosperity and power, no disgrace but po-

verty and neglect. What charm of inſtruction can cure the mind that is tainted with this diſorder? What ſyren voice can awaken a deſire of freedom, that is held to be meanneſs, and a want of ambition? or what perſuaſion can turn the grimace of politeneſs into real ſentiments of humanity and candour?

SECT.

SECT. VII.

Of Happineſs.

HAVING had under our conſideration the active powers and the moral qualities which diſtinguiſh the nature of man, is it ſtill neceſſary that we ſhould treat of his happineſs apart? This ſignificant term, the moſt frequent, and the moſt familiar, in our converſation, is, perhaps, on reflection, the leaſt underſtood. It ſerves to expreſs our ſatiſfaction, when any deſire is gratified: It is pronounced with a ſigh, when our object is diſtant: It means what we wiſh to obtain, and what we ſeldom ſtay to examine. We eſtimate the value of every ſubject by its utility, and its influence on happineſs; but we think that utility itſelf, and happineſs, require no explanation.

THOSE men are commonly eſteemed the happieſt, whoſe deſires are moſt frequently gratified. But if, in reality, the poſſeſſion of what they deſire, and a continued fruition, were requiſite to happineſs, mankind for the moſt part would have reaſon to complain of their lot. What they call their enjoyments, are generally momentary; and the object of ſanguine expectation, when obtained, no longer continues to occupy the mind: A new paſſion ſucceeds, and the imagination, as before, is intent on a diſtant felicity.

How

How many reflections of this ſort are ſuggeſted by melancholy, or by the effects of that very languor and inoccupation into which we would willingly ſink, under the notion of freedom from care and trouble?

When we enter on a formal computation of the enjoyments or ſufferings which are prepared for mankind, it is a chance but we find that pain, by its intenſeneſs, its duration, or frequency, is greatly predominant. The activity and eagerneſs with which we preſs from one ſtage of life to another, our unwillingneſs to return on the paths we have trod, our averſion in age to renew the frolicks of youth, or to repeat in manhood the amuſements of children, have been accordingly ſtated as proofs, that our memory of the paſt, and our feeling of the preſent, are equal ſubjects of diſlike and diſpleaſure*.

This concluſion, however, like many others, drawn from our ſuppoſed knowledge of cauſes, does not correſpond with experience. In every ſtreet, in every village, in every field, the greater number of perſons we meet, carry an aſpect that is chearful or thoughtleſs, indifferent, compoſed, buſy, or animated. The labourer whiſtles to his team, and the mechanic is at eaſe in his calling; the frolicſome and gay feel a ſeries of pleaſures, of which we know not the ſource; even they who demonſtrate the miſeries of human life, when intent on their

* Maupertuis; Eſſai de Morale.

argument,

arguing to eſcape from their ſorrows, and find a tolerable paſtime in proving that men are unhappy.

The very terms *pleaſure* and *pain*, perhaps, are equivocal; but if they are confined, as they appear to be in many of our reaſonings, to the mere ſenſations which have a reference to external objects, either in the memory of the paſt, the feeling of the preſent, or the apprehenſion of the future, it is a great error to ſuppoſe, that they comprehend all the conſtituents of happineſs or miſery; or that the good humour of an ordinary life is maintained by the prevalence of thoſe pleaſures, which have their ſeparate names, and are, on reflection, diſtinctly remembered.

The mind, during the greater part of its exiſtence, is employed in active exertions, not in merely attending to its own feelings of pleaſure or pain; and the liſt of its faculties, underſtanding, memory, foreſight, ſentiment, will, and intention, only contains the names of its different operations.

If, in the abſence of every ſenſation to which we commonly give the names either of *enjoyment* or *ſuffering*, our very exiſtence may have its oppoſite qualities of *happineſs* or *miſery*; and if what we call *pleaſure* or *pain*, occupies but a ſmall part of human life, compared to what paſſes in contrivance and execution, in purſuits and expectations, in conduct, reflection, and ſocial engagements; it muſt appear, that

that our active purſuits, at leaſt on accou[illegible] [illegible] duration, deſerve the greater part of our a[illegible] When their occaſions have failed, the dema[illegible] is not for pleaſure, but for ſomething to do; and the very complaints of a ſufferer are not ſo ſure a mark of diſtreſs, as the ſtare of the languid.

We ſeldom, however, reckon any taſk which we are bound to perform, among the bleſſings of life. We always aim at a period of pure enjoyment, or a termination of trouble; and overlook the ſource from which moſt of our preſent ſatisfactions are really drawn. Aſk the buſy, Where is the happineſs to which they aſpire? they will anſwer, perhaps, That it is to be found in the object of ſome preſent purſuit. If we aſk, Why they are not miſerable in the abſence of that happineſs? they will ſay, That they hope to attain it. But is it hope alone that ſupports the mind in the midſt of precarious and uncertain proſpects? and would aſſurance of ſucceſs fill the intervals of expectation with more pleaſing emotions? Give the huntſman his prey, give the gameſter the gold which is ſtaked on the game, that the one may not need to fatigue his perſon, nor the other to perplex his mind, and both will probably laugh at our folly: The one will ſtake his money anew, that he may be perplexed; the other will turn his ſtag to the field, that he may hear the cry of the dogs, and follow through danger and hardſhip. Withdraw the occupations of

men,

men, t[illegible]inate their deſires, exiſtence is a burden, and the iteration of memory is a torment.

The men of this country, ſays one lady, ſhould learn to ſow and to knit; it would hinder their time from being a burden to themſelves, and to other people. That is true, ſays another; for my part, though I never look abroad, I tremble at the proſpect of bad weather; for then the gentlemen come mopping to us for entertainment; and the ſight of a huſband in diſtreſs, is but a melancholy ſpectacle.

The difficulties and hardſhips of human life, are ſuppoſed to detract from the goodneſs of God; yet many of the paſtimes men deviſe for themſelves are fraught with difficulty and danger. The great inventor of the game of human life, knew well how to accommodate the players. The chances are matter of complaint: But if theſe were removed, the game itſelf would no longer amuſe the parties. In deviſing, or in executing a plan, in being carried on the tide of emotion and ſentiment, the mind ſeems to unfold its being, and to enjoy itſelf. Even where the end and the object are known to be of little avail, the talents and the fancy are often intenſely applied, and buſineſs or play may amuſe them alike. We only deſire repoſe to recruit our limited and our waſting force: When buſineſs fatigues, amuſement is often but a change of occupation. We are not always unhappy, even when we complain. There is a kind of affliction which makes an agreeable ſtate of the mind; and lamentation itſelf

itſelf is ſometimes an expreſſion of pleaſure. The painter and the poet have laid hold of this handle, and find, among the means of entertainment, a favourable reception for works that are compoſed to awaken our ſorrows.

To a being of this deſcription, therefore, it is a bleſſing to meet with incentives to action, whether in the deſire of pleaſure, or the averſion to pain. His activity is of more importance than the very pleaſure he ſeeks, and languor a greater evil than the ſuffering he ſhuns.

The gratifications of animal appetite are of ſhort duration; and ſenſuality is but a diſtemper of the mind, which ought to be cured by remembrance, if it were not perpetually inflamed by hope. The chace is not more ſurely terminated by the death of the game, than the joys of the voluptuary by the means of completing his debauch. As a band of ſociety, as a matter of diſtant purſuit, the objects of ſenſe make an important part in the ſyſtem of human life. They lead us to fulfil the purpoſes of nature, in preſerving the individual, and in perpetuating the ſpecies: but to rely on their uſe as a principal conſtituent of happineſs, were an error in ſpeculation, and would be ſtill more an error in practice. Even the maſter of the ſeraglio, for whom all the treaſures of empire are extorted from the hoards of its frighted inhabitants, for whom alone the chioceſt emerald and the diamond are drawn from the mine, for whom every breeze is enriched

with

with perfumes, for whom beauty is assembled from every quarter, and, animated by passions that ripen under the verticle sun, is confined to the grate for his use, is still, perhaps, more wretched than the very herd of the people, whose labours and properties are devoted to relieve him of trouble, and to procure him enjoyment.

Sensuality is easily overcome by any of the habits of pursuit which usually engage an active mind. When curiosity is awake, or when passion is excited, even in the midst of the feast when conversation grows warm, grows jovial, or serious, the pleasures of the table we know are forgotten. The boy contemns them for play, and the man of age declines them for business.

When we reckon the circumstances that correspond to the nature of any animal, or to that of man in particular, such as safety, shelter, food, and the other means of enjoyment or preservation, we sometimes think that we have found a sensible and a solid foundation on which to rest his felicity. But those who are least disposed to moralize, observe, that happiness is not connected with fortune, although fortune includes at once all the means of subsistence, and the means of sensual indulgence. The circumstances that require abstinence, courage, and conduct, expose us to hazard, and are in description of the painful kind; yet the able, the brave, and the ardent, seem most to enjoy themselves when

placed in the midſt of difficulties, and obliged to employ the powers they poſſeſs.

Spinola being told, that Sir Francis Vere died of have nothing to do, ſaid, "That was enough "to kill a general*." How many are there to whom war itſelf is a paſtime, who chuſe the life of a ſoldier, expoſed to dangers and continued fatigues; of a mariner, in conflict with every hardſhip, and bereft of every conveniency; of a politician, whoſe ſport is the conduct of parties and factions; and who, rather than be idle, will do the buſineſs of men and of nations for whom he has not the ſmalleſt regard. Such men do not chuſe pain as preferable to pleaſure, but they are incited by a reſtleſs diſpoſition to make continued exertions of capacity and reſolution; they triumph in the midſt of their ſtruggles; they droop, and they languiſh, when the occaſion of their labour has ceaſed.

What was enjoyment, in the ſenſe of that youth, who, according to Tacitus, loved danger itſelf, not the rewards of courage? What is the proſpect of pleaſure, when the ſound of the horn or the trumpet, the cry of the dogs, or the ſhout of war, awaken the ardour of the ſportſman and the ſoldier? The moſt animating occaſions of human life, are calls to danger and hardſhip, not invitations to ſafety and eaſe: and man himſelf, in his excellence, is not an animal of pleaſure, nor deſtined merely to enjoy what the elements bring to his uſe; but, like his

* Life of Lord Herbert.

aſſociates,

associates, the dog and the horse, to follow the exercises of his nature, in preference to what are called it enjoyments; to pine in the lap of ease and of affluence, and to exult in the midst of alarms that seem to threaten his being. In all which, his disposition to action only keeps pace with the variety of powers with which he is furnished; and the most respectable attributes of his nature, magnanimity, fortitude and wisdom, carry a manifest reference to the difficulties with which he is destined to struggle.

If animal pleasure becomes insipid when the spirit is roused by a different object, it is well known likewise, that the sense of pain is prevented by any vehement affection of the soul. Wounds received in a heat of passion, in the hurry, the ardour, or consternation of battle are never felt till the ferment of the mind subsides. Even torments, deliberately applied, and industriously prolonged, are born with firmness, and with an appearance of ease, when the mind is possessed with some vigorous sentiment, whether of religion, enthusiasm, or love to mankind. The continued mortifications of superstitious devotees in several ages of the Christian church; the wild penances, still voluntarily borne, during many years, by the religionists of the east; the contempt in which famine and torture are held by most savage nations; the chearful or obstinate patience of the soldier in the field; the hardships endured by the sportsman in his pastime, show how much we may

may err in computing the miſeries of men, from the meaſures of trouble and of ſuffering they ſeem to incur. And if there be a refinement in affirming, that their happineſs is not to be meaſured by the contrary enjoyments, it is a refinement which was made by Regulus and Cincinnatus before the date of philoſophy. Fabricius knew it while he had heard arguments only on the oppoſite ſide*: It is a refinement, which every boy knows at his play, and every ſavage confirms, when he looks from his foreſt on the pacific city, and ſcorns the plantation, whoſe maſter he cares not to imitate.

MAN, it muſt be confeſſed, notwithſtanding all this activity of his mind, is an animal in the full extent of that deſignation. When the body ſickens, the mind droops; and when the blood ceaſes to flow, the ſoul takes its departure. Charged with the care of his preſervation, admoniſhed by a ſenſe of pleaſure or pain, and guarded by an inſtinctive fear of death, nature has not intruſted his ſafety to the mere vigilance of his underſtanding, nor to the government of his uncertain reflections.

THE diſtinction betwixt mind and body is followed by conſequences of the greateſt importance; but the facts to which we now refer, are not founded on any tenets whatever. They are equally true, whether we admit or reject the diſtinction in queſtion, or whether we ſuppoſe, that this living agent is formed of one, or is an aſſemblage of ſeparate

* Plutarch in Vit. Pyrrh.

natures,

natures. And the materialist, by treating of man as of an engine, cannot make any change in the state of his history. He is a being, who, by a multiplicity of visible organs, performs a variety of functions. He bends his joints, contracts or relaxes his muscles in our sight. He continues the beating of the heart in his breast, and the flowing of the blood to every part of his frame. He performs other operations which we cannot refer to any corporeal organ. He perceives, he recollects, and forecasts; he desires, and he shuns; he admires, and contemns. He enjoys his pleasures, or he endures his pain. All these different functions, in some measure, go well or ill together. When the motion of the blood is languid, the muscles relax, the understanding is tardy, and the fancy is dull: when distemper assails him, the physician must attend no less to what he thinks, than to what he eats, and examine the returns of his passion, together with the strokes of his pulse.

WITH all his sagacity, his precautions, and his instincts, which are given to preserve his being, he partakes in the fate of other animals, and seems to be formed only that he may die. Myriads perish before they reach the perfection of their kind; and the individual, with an option to owe the prolongation of his temporary course to resolution and conduct, or to abject fear, frequently chuses the latter, and by a habit of timidity, embitters the life he is so intent to preserve.

MAN,

MAN, however, at times, exempted from this mortifying lot, ſeems to act without any regard to the length of his period. When he thinks intenſely, or deſires with ardour, pleaſures and pains from any other quarter aſſail him in vain. Even in his dying hour, the muſcles acquire a tone from his ſpirit, and the mind ſeems to depart in its vigour, and in the midſt of a ſtruggle to obtain the recent aim of its toils. Muley Moluck, borne on his litter, and ſpent with diſeaſe, ſtill fought the battle, in the midſt of which he expired; and the laſt effort he made, with a finger on his lips, was a ſignal to conceal his death*: The precaution, perhaps, of all which he had hitherto taken, the moſt neceſſary to prevent a defeat.

CAN no reflections aid us in acquiring this habit of the ſoul, ſo uſeful in carrying us through many of the ordinary ſcenes of life? If we ſay, that they cannot, the reality of its happineſs is not the leſs evident. The Greeks and the Romans conſidered contempt of pleaſure, endurance of pain, and neglect of life, as eminent qualities of a man, and a principal ſubject of diſcipline. They truſted, that the vigorous ſpirit would find worthy objects on which to employ its force; and that the firſt ſtep towards a reſolute choice of ſuch objects was to ſhake off the meanneſs of a ſollicitous and timorous mind.

* Vertot's Revolutions of Portugal.

MANKIND,

MANKIND, in general, have courted occasions to display their courage, and frequently, in search of admiration, have presented a spectacle, which to those who have ceased to regard fortitude on its own account, becomes a subject of horror. Scevola held his arm in the fire, to shake the soul of Porsenna. The savage inures his body to the torture, that in the hour of trial he may exult over his his enemy. Even the Mussulman tears his flesh to win the heart of his mistress, and comes in gaiety, streaming with blood, to shew that he deserves her esteem*.

SOME nations carry the practice of inflicting, or of sporting with pain, to a degree that is either cruel or absurd; others regard every prospect of bodily suffering as the greatest of evils; and in the midst of their troubles, imbitter every real affliction, with the terrors of a feeble and dejected imagination. We are not bound to answer for the follies of either, nor, in treating a question which relates to the nature of man, make an estimate of its strength, or its weakness, from the habits or apprehensions peculiar to any nation or age.

* Letters of the Right Honourable Lady M—y W—— M———e.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

The same subject continued.

WHOEVER has compared together the different conditions and manners of men, under varieties of education or fortune, will be satisfied, that mere situation does not constitute their happiness or misery; nor a diversity of external observances imply any opposition of sentiments on the subject of morality. They express their kindness and their enmity in different actions; but kindness or enmity is still the principal article of consideration in human life. They engage in different pursuits, or acquiesce in different conditions; but act from passions nearly the same. There is no precise measure of accommodation required to suit their conveniency, nor any degree of danger or safety under which they are peculiarly fitted to act. Courage and generosity, fear and envy, are not peculiar to any station or order of men; nor is there any condition in which some of the human race have not shewn, that it is possible to employ, with propriety, the talents and virtues of their species.

WHAT, then, is that mysterious thing called *Happiness*, which may have place in such a variety of stations, and to which circumstances in one age or nation thought necessary, are in another held to be destructive or of no effect? It is not the succession

cession of mere animal pleasures, which, apart from the occupation or the company in which they engage us, can fill up but a few moments in human life. On too frequent a repetition, those pleasures turn to satiety and disgust; they tear the constitution to which they are applied in excess, and, like the lightning of night, only serve to darken the gloom through which they occasionally break. Happiness is not that state of repose, or that imaginary freedom from care, which at a distance is so frequent an object of desire, but with its approach brings a tedium, or a langour, more unsupportable than pain itself. If the preceding observations on this subject be just, it arises more from the pursuit, than from the attainment of any end whatever; and in every new situation to which we arrive, even in the course of a prosperous life, it depends more on the degree in which our minds are properly employed, than it does on the circumstances in which we are destined to act, on the materials which are placed in our hands, or the tools with which we are furnished.

If this be confessed in respect to that class of pursuits which are distinguished by the name of *amusement*, and which, in the case of men who are commonly deemed the most happy, occupy the greater part of human life, we may apprehend, that it holds, much more than is commonly suspected, in many cases of business, where the end to be

gained, and not the occupation, is ſuppoſed to have the principal value.

The miſer himſelf, we are told, can ſometimes conſider the care of his wealth as a paſtime, and has challenged his heir, to have more pleaſure in ſpending, than he in amaſſing his fortune. With this degree of indifference to what may be the conduct of others; with this confinement of his care to what he has choſen as his own province, more eſpecially if he has conquered in himſelf the paſſions of jealouſy and envy, which tear the covetous mind; why may not the man whoſe object is money, be underſtood to lead a life of amuſement and pleaſure, not only more entire than that of the ſpendthrift, but even as much as the virtuoſo, the ſcholar, the man of taſte, or any of that claſs of perſons who have found out a method of paſſing their leiſure without offence, and to whom the acquiſitions made, or the works produced, in their ſeveral ways, perhaps, are as uſeleſs as the bag to the miſer, or the counter to thoſe who play from mere diſſipation at any game of ſkill or of chance?

We are ſoon tired of diverſions that do not approach to the nature of buſineſs, that is, that do not engage ſome paſſion, or give an exerciſe proportioned to our talents, and our faculties. The chace and the gaming-table have each their dangers and difficulties, to excite and employ the mind. All games of contention animate our emulation,

and give a species of party-zeal. The mathematician is only to be amused with intricate problems, the lawyer and the casuist with cases that try their subtilty, and occupy their judgment.

The desire of active engagements, like every other natural appetite, may be carried to excess; and men may debauch in amusements, as well as in the use of wine, or other intoxicating liquors. At first, a trifling stake, and the occupation of a moderate passion, may have served to amuse the gamester; but when the drug becomes familiar, it fails to produce its effect: The play is made deep, and the interest increased, to awaken his attention; he is carried on by degrees, and in the end comes to seek for amusement, and to find it only in those passions of anxiety, hope, and despair, which are roused by the hazard into which he has thrown the whole of his fortunes.

If men can thus turn their amusements into a scene more serious and interesting than that of business itself, it will be difficult to assign a reason, why business, and many of the occupations of human life, independent of any distant consequences or future events, may not be chosen as an amusement, and adopted on account of the pastime they bring. This is, perhaps, the foundation on which, without the aid of reflection, the contented and the chearful have rested the gaiety of their tempers. It is perhaps the most solid basis of fortitude which any

any reflection can lay; and happiness itself is secured by making a certain species of conduct our amusement; and, by considering life in the general estimate of its value, as well as on every particular occasion, as a mere scene for the exercise of the mind, and the engagements of the heart. "I will try and "attempt every thing," says Brutus, "I will never cease to recal my country from this state of "servility. If the event be favourable, it will prove "matter of joy to us all; If not, yet I, notwith- "standing, shall rejoice." Why rejoice in a disappointment? Why not be dejected, when his country was overwhelmed? Because sorrow, perhaps, and dejection, can do no good. Nay, but they must be endured when they come. And whence should they come to me? might the Roman say; I have followed my mind, and can follow it still. Events may have changed the situation in which I am destined to act; but can they hinder my acting the part of a man? Shew me a situation in which a man can neither act nor die, and I will own he is wretched.

Whoever has the force of mind steadily to view human life under this aspect, has only to chuse well his occupations, in order to command that state of enjoyment, and freedom of soul, which probably constitute the peculiar felicity to which his active nature is destined.

The dispositions of men, and consequently their occupations, are commonly divided into two principal

cipal classes; the selfish, and the social. The first are indulged in solitude; and if they carry a reference to mankind, it is that of emulation, competition, and enmity. The second incline us to live with our fellow-creatures, and to do them good; they tend to unite the members of society together; they terminate in a mutual participation of their cares and enjoyments, and render the presence of men an occasion of joy. Under this class may be enumerated the passions of the sexes, the affections of parents and children, general humanity, or singular attachments; above all, that habit of the soul by which we consider ourselves as but a part of some beloved community, and as but individual members of some society, whose general welfare is to us the supreme object of zeal, and the great rule of our conduct. This affection is a principle of candour, which knows no partial distinctions, and is confined to no bounds: it may extend its effects beyond our personal acquaintance; it may, in the mind, and in thought, at least, make us feel a relation to the universe, and to the whole creation of God. "Shall "any one," says Antoninus, "love the city of Ce-"crops, and you not love the city of God?"[a]

No emotion of the heart is indifferent. It is either an act of vivacity and joy, or a feeling of sadness; a transport of pleasure, or a convulsion of anguish: and the exercises of our different dispositions, as well as their gratifications, are likely to

prove

prove matter of the greateſt importance to our happineſs or miſery.

The individual is charged with the care of his animal preſervation. He may exiſt in ſolitude, and, far removed from ſociety, perform many functions of ſenſe, imagination, and reaſon. He is even rewarded for the proper diſcharge of thoſe functions; and all the natural exerciſes which relate to himſelf, as well as to his fellow-creatures, not only occupy without diſtreſſing him, but, in many inſtances, are attended with poſitive pleaſures, and fill up the hours of life with agreeable occupation.

There is a degree, however, in which we ſuppoſe that the care of ourſelves becomes a ſource of painful anxiety and cruel paſſions; in which it degenerates into avarice, vanity, or pride; and in which, by foſtering habits of jealouſy and envy, of fear and malice, it becomes as deſtructive of our own enjoyments, as it is hoſtile to the welfare of mankind. This evil, however, is not to be charged upon any exceſs in the care of ourſelves, but upon a mere miſtake in the choice of our objects. We look abroad for a happineſs which is to be found only in the qualities of the heart: We think ourſelves dependent on accidents; and are therefore kept in ſuſpenſe and ſolicitude: We think ourſelves dependent on the will of other men; and are therefore ſervile and timid: We think our felicity is placed in ſubjects for which our fellow-creatures are rivals

and competitors; and in purſuit of happineſs, we engage in thoſe ſcenes of emulation, envy, hatred, animoſity, and revenge, that lead to the higheſt pitch of diſtreſs. We act, in ſhort, as if to preſerve ourſelves were to retain our weakneſs, and perpetuate our ſufferings. We charge the ills of a diſtempered imagination, and a corrupt heart, to the account of our fellow-creatures, to whom we refer the pangs of our diſappointment or malice; and while we foſter our miſery, are ſurpriſed that the care of ourſelves is attended with no better effects. But he who remembers that he is by nature a rational being, and a member of ſociety; that to preſerve himſelf, is to preſerve his reaſon, and to preſerve the beſt feelings of his heart; will encounter with none of theſe inconveniencies; and in the care of himſelf, will find ſubjects only of ſatisfaction and triumph.

THE diviſion of our appetites into benevolent and ſelfiſh, has probably, in ſome degree, helped to miſlead our apprehenſion on the ſubject of perſonal enjoyment and private good; and our zeal to prove that virtue is diſintereſted, has not greatly promoted its cauſe. The gratification of a ſelfiſh deſire, it is thought, brings advantage or pleaſure to ourſelves; that of benevolence terminates in the pleaſure or advantage of others: Whereas, in reality, the gratification of every deſire is a perſonal enjoyment, and its value being proportioned to the particular quality or force of the ſentiment, it may happen

pen that the ſame perſon may reap a greater advantage from the good fortune he has procured to another, than from that he has obtained for himſelf.

While the gratifications of benevolence, therefore, are as much our own as thoſe of any other deſire whatever, the mere exerciſes of this diſpoſition are, on many accounts, to be conſidered as the firſt and the principal conſtituent of human happineſs. Every act of kindneſs, or of care, in the parent to his child; every emotion of the heart, in friendſhip or in love, in public zeal, or general humanity, are ſo many acts of enjoyment and ſatisfaction. Pity itſelf, and compaſſion, even grief and melancholy, when grafted on ſome tender affection, partake of the nature of the ſtock; and if they are not poſitive pleaſures, are at leaſt pains of a peculiar nature, which we do not even wiſh to exchange but for a very real enjoyment, obtained in relieving our object. Even extremes, in this claſs of our diſpoſitions, as they are the reverſe of hatred, envy, and malice, ſo they are never attended with thoſe excruciating anxieties, jealouſies, and fears, which tear the intereſted mind; or if, in reality, any ill paſſion ariſe from a pretended attachment to our fellow-creatures, that attachment may be ſafely condemned, as not genuine. If we be diſtruſtful or jealous, our pretended affection is probably no more than a deſire of attention and perſonal conſideration, a motive which frequently inclines us to

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be connected with our fellow-creatures; but to which we are as frequently willing to sacrifice their happiness. We consider them as the tools of our vanity, pleasure, or interest; not as the parties on whom we may bestow the effects of our good-will, and our love.

A MIND devoted to this class of its affections, being occupied with an object that may engage it habitually, is not reduced to court the amusements or pleasures with which persons of an ill temper are obliged to repair their disgusts: And temperance becomes an easy task when gratifications of sense are supplanted by those of the heart. Courage, too, is most easily assumed, or is rather inseparable from that ardour of the mind, in society, friendship, or in public action, which makes us forget subjects of personal anxiety or fear, and attend chiefly to the object of our zeal or affection, not to the trifling inconveniencies, dangers, or hardships, which we ourselves may encounter in striving to maintain it.

IT should seem, therefore, to be the happiness of man, to make his social dispositions the ruling spring of his occupations; to state himself as the member of a community, for whose general good his heart may glow with an ardent zeal, to the suppression of those personal cares which are the foundation of painful anxieties, fear, jealousy, and envy; or, as Mr Pope expresses the same sentiment,

 "Man,

" Man, like the generous vine, ſupported lives;
" The ſtrength he gains, is from th' embrace he
" gives*."

We commonly apprehend, that it is our duty to do kindneſſes, and our happineſs to receive them: but if, in reality, courage, and a heart devoted to the good of mankind, are the conſtituents of human felicity, the kindneſs which is done infers a happineſs in the perſon from whom it proceeds, not in him on whom it is beſtowed; and the greateſt good which men poſſeſſed of fortitude and generoſity can procure to their fellow-creatures, is a participation of this happy character.

If this be the good of the individual, it is likewiſe that of mankind; and virtue no longer impoſes a taſk by which we are obliged to beſtow upon others that good from which we ourſelves refrain; but ſuppoſes, in the higheſt degree, as poſſeſſed by ourſelves, that ſtate of felicity which we are required to promote in the world. "You will confer the "greateſt benefit on your city," ſays Epictetus, "not by raiſing the roofs, but by exalting the ſouls "of your fellow-citizens; for it is better that great "ſouls ſhould live in ſmall habitations, than that "abject ſlaves ſhould burrow in great houſes †."

* The ſame maxim will apply throughout every part of nature. *To love, is to enjoy pleaſure: To hate, is to be in pain.*

† Mrs Carter's tranſlation of the works of Epictetus.

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To the benevolent, the ſatisfaction of others is a ground of enjoyment; and exiſtence itſelf, in a world that is governed by the wiſdom of God, is a bleſſing. The mind, freed from cares that lead to puſillanimity and meanneſs, becomes calm, active, fearleſs, and bold; capable of every enterpriſe, and vigorous in the exerciſe of every talent, by which the nature of man is adorned. On this foundation was raiſed the admirable character, which, during a certain period of their ſtory, diſtinguiſhed the celebrated nations of antiquity, and rendered familiar and ordinary in their manners, examples of magnanimity, which, under governments leſs favourable to the public affections, rarely occur; or which, without being much practiſed, or even underſtood, are made ſubjects of admiration and ſwelling panegyric. "Thus," ſays Xenophon, "died "Thraſybulus; who indeed appears to have been "a good man." What valuable praiſe, and how ſignificant to thoſe who know the ſtory of this admirable perſon! The members of thoſe illuſtrious ſtates, from the habit of conſidering themſelves as part of a community, or at leaſt as deeply involved with ſome order of men in the ſtate, were regardleſs of perſonal conſiderations: they had a perpetual view to objects which excite a great ardour in the ſoul; which led them to act perpetually in the view of their fellow-citizens, and to practiſe thoſe arts of deliberation, elocution, policy, and war, on which the fortunes of nations, or of men, in their collective body, depend. To the force of mind collected

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in this career, and to the improvements of wit which were made in purſuing it, theſe nations owed, not only their magnanimity, and the ſuperiority of their political and military conduct, but even the arts of poetry and literature, which among them were only the inferior appendages of a genius otherwiſe excited, cultivated, and refined.

To the ancient Greek, or the Roman, the individual was nothing, and the public every thing. To the modern, in too many nations of Europe, the individual is every thing, and the public nothing. The ſtate is merely a combination of departments, in which conſideration, wealth, eminence, or power, are offered as the reward of ſervice. It was the nature of modern government, even in its firſt inſtitution, to beſtow on every individual a fixed ſtation and dignity, which he was to maintain for himſelf. Our anceſtors, in rude ages, during the receſs of wars from abroad, fought for their perſonal claims at home, and by their competitions, and the balance of their powers, maintained a kind of political freedom in the ſtate, while private parties were ſubject to continual wrongs and oppreſſions. Their poſterity, in times more poliſhed, have repreſſed the civil diſorders in which the activity of earlier ages chiefly conſiſted; but they employ the calm they have gained, not in foſtering a zeal for thoſe laws, and that conſtitution of government, to which they owe their protection, but in practiſing apart, and each for himſelf, the ſeveral arts of perſonal

ſonal advancement, or profit, which their political eſtabliſhments may enable them to purſue with ſucceſs. Commerce, which may be ſuppoſed to comprehend every lucrative art, is accordingly conſidered as the great object of nations, and the principal ſtudy of mankind.

So much are we accuſtomed to conſider perſonal fortune as the ſole object of care, that even under popular eſtabliſhments, and in ſtates where different orders of men are ſummoned to partake in the government of their country, and where the liberties they enjoy cannot be long preſerved, without vigilance and activity on the part of the ſubject; ſtill they, who, in the vulgar phraſe, have not their fortunes to make, are ſuppoſed to be at a loſs for occupation, and betake themſelves to ſolitary paſtimes, or cultivate what they are pleaſed to call a taſte for gardening, building, drawing, or muſick. With this aid, they endeavour to fill up the blanks of a liſtleſs life, and avoid the neceſſity of curing their languors by any poſitive ſervice to their country, or to mankind.

The weak or the malicious are well employed in any thing that is innocent, and are fortunate in finding any occupation which prevents the effects of a temper that would prey upon themſelves, or upon their fellow-creatures. But they who are bleſſed with a happy diſpoſition, with capacity and vigour, incur a real debauchery, by having any

amuſement that occupies an improper ſhare of their time; and are really cheated of their happineſs, in being made to believe, that any occupation or paſtime is better fitted to amuſe themſelves, than that which at the ſame time produces ſome real good to their fellow-creatures.

This ſort of entertainment indeed, cannot be the choice of the mercenary, the envious, or the malicious. Its value is known only to perſons of an oppoſite temper; and to their experience alone we appeal. Guided by mere diſpoſition, and without the aid of reflection, in buſineſs, in friendſhip, and in public life, they often acquit themſelves well; and borne with ſatisfaction on the tide of their emotions and ſentiments, enjoy the preſent hour, without recollection of the paſt, or hopes of the future. It is in ſpeculation, not in practice, they are made to diſcover, that virtue is a taſk of ſeverity and ſelf-denial.

SECT.

SECT. X.

Of National Felicity.

MAN is, by nature, the member of a community; and when conſidered in this capacity, the individual appears to be no longer made for himſelf. He muſt forego his happineſs and his freedom, where theſe interfere with the good of ſociety. He is only part of a whole; and the praiſe we think due to his virtue, is but a branch of that more general commendation we beſtow on the member of a body, on the part of a fabric or engine, for being well fitted to occupy its place, and to produce its effect.

IF this follow from the relation of a part to its whole, and if the public good be the principal object with individuals, it is likeways true, that the happineſs of individuals is the great end of civil ſociety: For, in what ſenſe can a public enjoy any good, if its members, conſidered apart, be unhappy?

THE intereſts of ſociety, however, and of its members, are eaſily reconciled. If the individual owe every degree of conſideration to the public, he receives, in paying that very conſideration, the greateſt happineſs of which his nature is capable; and

and the greateſt bleſſing the public can beſtow on its members, is to keep them attached to itſelf. That is the moſt happy ſtate, which is moſt beloved by its ſubjects; and they are the moſt happy men, whoſe hearts are engaged to a community, in which they find every object of generoſity and zeal, and a ſcope to the exerciſe of every talent, and of every virtuous diſpoſition.

After we have thus found general maxims, the greater part of our trouble remains, their juſt application to particular caſes. Nations are different in reſpect to their extent, numbers of people, and wealth; in reſpect to the arts they practiſe, and the accommodations they have procured. Theſe circumſtances may not only affect the manners of men; they even, in our eſteem, come into competition with the article of manners itſelf; are ſuppoſed to conſtitute a national felicity, independent of virtue; and give a title, upon which we indulge our own vanity, and that of other nations, as we do that of private men, on the ſcore of their fortunes and honours.

But if this way of meaſuring happineſs, when applied to private men, be ruinous and falſe, it is ſo no leſs when applied to nations. Wealth, commerce, extent of territory, and the knowledge of arts, are, when properly employed, the means of preſervation, and the foundations of power. If they fail in part, the nation is weakened; if they were entirely

entirely with-held, the race would perifh: Their tendency is to maintain numbers of men, but not to conftitute happinefs. They will accordingly maintain the wretched, as well as the happy. They anfwer one purpofe, but are not therefore fufficient for all; and are of little fignificance, when only employed to maintain a timid, dejected, and fervile people.

GREAT and powerful ftates are able to overcome and fubdue the weak; polifhed and commercial nations have more wealth, and practife a greater variety of arts, than the rude: But the happinefs of men, in all cafes alike, confifts in the bleffings of a candid, an active, and ftrenuous mind. And if we confider the ftate of fociety merely as that into which mankind are led by their propenfities, as a ftate to be valued from its effect in preferving the fpecies, in ripening their talents, and exciting their virtues, we need not enlarge our communities, in order to enjoy thefe advantages. We frequently obtain them in the moft remarkable degree, where nations remain independent, and are of a fmall extent.

To increafe the numbers of mankind, may be admitted, as a great and important object: But to extend the limits of any particular ftate, is not, perhaps, the way to obtain it; while we defire that our fellow-creatures fhould multiply, it does not follow, that the whole fhould, if poffible, be united

under one head. We are apt to admire the empire of the Romans, as a model of national greatneſs and ſplendour: But the greatneſs we admire in this caſe, was ruinous to the virtue and the happineſs of mankind; it was found to be inconſiſtent with all the advantages which that conquering people had formerly enjoyed in the articles of government and manners.

The emulation of nations proceeds from their diviſion. A cluſter of ſtates, like a company of men, find the exerciſe of their reaſon, and the teſt of their virtues, in the affairs they tranſact, upon a foot of equality, and of ſeparate intereſt. The meaſures taken for ſafety, including great part of the national policy, are relative in every ſtate to what is apprehended from abroad. Athens was neceſſary to Sparta, in the exerciſe of her virtue, as ſteel is to flint in the production of fire; and if the cities of Greece had been united under one head, we ſhould never have heard of Epaminondas or Thraſybulus, of Lycurgus or Solon.

When we reaſon in behalf of our ſpecies, therefore, although we may lament the abuſes which ſometimes ariſe from independence, and oppoſition of intereſt; yet, whilſt any degrees of virtue remain with mankind, we cannot wiſh to croud, under one eſtabliſhment, numbers of men who may ſerve to conſtitute ſeveral; or to commit affairs to the conduct of one ſenate, one legiſlative or executive

tive power, which, upon a distinct and separate footing, might furnish an exercise of ability, and a theatre of glory to many.

This may be a subject upon which no determinate rule can be given, but the admiration of boundless dominion is a ruinous error; and in no instance, perhaps, is the real interest of mankind more entirely mistaken.

The measure of enlargement to be wished for any particular state, is often to be taken from the condition of its neighbours. Where a number of states are contiguous, they should be near an equality, in order that they may be mutually objects of respect and consideration, and in order that they may possess that independence in which the political life of a nation consists.

When the kingdoms of Spain were united, when the great fiefs in France were annexed to the crown, it was no longer expedient for the nations of Great Britain to continue disjoined.

The small republics of Greece, indeed, by their subdivisions, and the balance of their power, found almost in every village the object of nations. Every little district was a nursery of excellent men, and what is now the wretched corner of a great empire, was the field on which mankind have reaped their principal honours. But in modern Europe, republics

republics of a ſimilar extent, are like ſhrubs, under the ſhade of a taller wood, choaked by the neighbourhood of more powerful ſtates. In their caſe, a certain diſproportion of force fruſtrates, in a great meaſure, the advantage of ſeparation. They are like the trader in Poland, who is the more deſpicable, and the leſs ſecure, that he is neither maſter nor ſlave.

INDEPENDENT communities, in the mean time, however weak, are averſe to a coalition, not only where it comes with an air of impoſition, or unequal treaty, but even where it implies no more than the admiſſion of new members to an equal ſhare of conſideration with the old. The citizen has no intereſt in the annexation of kingdoms; he muſt find his importance diminiſhed, as the ſtate is enlarged: But ambitious men, under the enlargement of territority, find a more plentiful harveſt of power, and of wealth, while government itſelf is an eaſier taſk. Hence the ruinous progreſs of empire; and hence free nations, under the ſhew of acquiring dominion, ſuffer themſelves, in the end, to be yoked with the ſlaves they had conquered.

OUR deſire to augment the force of a nation is the only pretext for enlarging its territory; but this meaſure, when purſued to extremes, ſeldom fails to fruſtrate itſelf.

NOTWITHSTANDING the advantage of numbers, and ſuperior reſources in war, the ſtrength of a na-

tion-

tion is derived from the character, not from the wealth, nor from the multitude of its people. If the treasure of a state can hire numbers of men, erect ramparts, and furnish the implements of war; the possessions of the fearful are easily seized; a timorous multitude falls into rout of itself; ramparts may be scaled where they are not defended by valour; and arms are of consequence only in the hands of the brave. The band to which Agesilaus pointed as the wall of his city, made a defence for their country more permanent, and more effectual, than the rock and the cement with which other cities were fortified.

We should owe little to that statesman who were to contrive a defence that might supersede the external uses of virtue. It is wisely ordered for man, as a rational being, that the employment of reason is necessary to his preservation; it is fortunate for him, in the pursuit of distinction, that his personal consideration depends on his character; and it is fortunate for nations, that, in order to be powerful and safe, they must strive to maintain the courage, and cultivate the virtues, of their people. By the use of such means, they at once gain their external ends, and are happy.

Peace and unanimity are commonly considered as the principal foundations of public felicity; yet the rivalship of separate communities, and the agitations of a free people, are the principles of political

tical life, and the ſchool of men. How ſhall we reconcile theſe jarring and oppoſite tenets? It is, perhaps, not neceſſary to reconcile them. The pacific may do what they can to allay the animoſities, and to reconcile the opinions, of men; and it will be happy if they can ſucceed in repreſſing their crimes, and in calming the worſt of their paſſions. Nothing in the mean time, but corruption or ſlavery can ſuppreſs the debates that ſubſiſt among men of integrity, who bear an equal part in the adminiſtration of ſtate.

A perfect agreement in matters of opinion is not to be obtained in the moſt ſelect company; and if it were, what would become of ſociety? "The "Spartan legiſlator," ſays Plutarch, "appears to "have ſown the ſeeds of variance and diſſenſion "among his countrymen: he meant that good "citizens ſhould be led to diſpute; he conſidered "emulation as the brand by which their virtues "were kindled; and ſeemed to apprehend, that a "complaiſance, by which men ſubmit their opinions "without examination, is a principal ſource of cor"ruption."

Forms of government are ſuppoſed to decide of the happineſs or miſery of mankind. But forms of government muſt be varied, in order to ſuit the extent, the way of ſubſiſtence, the character, and the manners of different nations. In ſome caſes, the multitude may be ſuffered to govern themſelves; in

in others they muſt be ſeverely reſtrained. The inhabitants of a village, in ſome primitive age, may have been ſafely intruſted to the conduct of reaſon, and to the ſuggeſtion of their innocent views; but the tenants of Newgate can ſcarcely be truſted, with chains locked to their bodies, and bars of iron fixed to their legs. How is it poſſible, therefore, to find any ſingle form of government that would ſuit mankind in every condition?

We proceed, however, in the following ſection, to point out the diſtinctions, and to explain the language which occurs in this place, on the head of different models for ſubordination and government.

S E C T. X.

The ſame ſubject continued.

IT is a common obſervation, That mankind were originally equal. They have indeed by nature equal rights to their preſervation, and to the uſe of their talents; but they are fitted for different ſtations; and when they are claſſed by a rule taken from this circumſtance, they ſuffer no injuſtice on the ſide of their natural rights. It is obvious, that ſome mode of ſubordination is as neceſſary to men as ſociety itſelf; and this, not only to attain the ends of government, but to comply with an order eſtabliſhed by nature.

PRIOR to any political inſtitution whatever, men are qualified by a great diverſity of talents, by a different tone of the ſoul, and ardour of the paſſions, to act a variety of parts. Bring them together, each will find his place. They cenſure or applaud in a body; they conſult and deliberate in more ſelect parties; they take or give an aſcendant as individuals; and numbers are by this means fitted to act in company, and to preſerve their communities, before any formal diſtribution of office is made.

WE are formed to act in this manner; and if we have any doubts with relation to the rights of go-

vernment in general, we owe our perplexity more to the subtilties of the speculative, than to any uncertainty in the feelings of the heart. Involved in the resolutions of our company, we move with the croud before we have determined the rule by which its will is collected. We follow a leader, before we have settled the ground of his pretensions, or adjusted the form of his election: and it is not till after mankind have committed many errors in the capacities of magistrate and subject, that they think of making government itself a subject of rules.

If therefore, in considering the variety of forms under which societies subsist, the casuist is pleased to inquire, What title one man, or any number of men, have to controul his actions? he may be answered, None at all, provided that his actions have no effect to the prejudice of his fellow-creatures; but if they have, the rights of defence, and the obligation to repress the commission of wrongs, belong to collective bodies, as well as to individuals. Many rude nations, having no formal tribunals for the judgment of crimes, assemble, when alarmed by any flagrant offence, and take their measures with the criminal as they would with an enemy.

But will this consideration, which confirms the title to sovereignty, where it is exercised by the society in its collective capacity, or by those to whom the powers of the whole are committed, likewise

ſupport the claim to dominion, where-ever it is caſually lodged, or even where it is only maintained by force?

This queſtion may be ſufficiently anſwered, by obſerving, that a right to do juſtice, and to do good, is competent to every individual, or order of men; and that the exerciſe of this right has no limits but in the defect of power. Whoever, therefore, has power, may employ it to this extent; and no previous convention is required to juſtify his conduct. But a right to do wrong, or to commit injuſtice, is an abuſe of language, and a contradiction in terms. It is no more competent to the collective body of a people, than it is to any ſingle uſurper. When we admit ſuch a prerogative in the caſe of any ſovereign, we can only mean to expreſs the extent of his power, and the force with which he is enabled to execute his pleaſure. Such a prerogative is aſſumed by the leader of banditti at the head of his gang, or by a deſpotic prince at the head of his troops. When the ſword is preſented by either, the traveller or the inhabitant may ſubmit from a ſenſe of neceſſity or fear; but he lyes under no obligation from a motive of duty or juſtice.

The multiplicity of forms, in the mean time, which different ſocieties offer to our view, is almoſt infinite. The claſſes into which they diſtribute their members, the manner in which they eſtabliſh the legiſlative and executive powers, the imperceptible circumſtances

cumstances by which they are led to have different customs, and to confer on their governors unequal measures of power and authority, give rise to perpetual distinctions between constitutions the most nearly resembling each other, and give to human affairs a variety in detail, which, in its full extent, no understanding can comprehend, and no memory retain.

In order to have a general and comprehensive knowledge of the whole, we must be determined on this, as on every other subject, to overlook many particulars and singularities, distinguishing different governments; to fix our attention on certain points, in which many agree; and thereby establish a few general heads, under which the subject may be distinctly considered. When we have marked the characteristics which form the general points of coincidence; when we have pursued them to their consequences in the several modes of legislation, execution, and judicature, in the establishments which relate to police, commerce, religion, or domestic life; we have made an acquisition of knowledge, which, though it does not supersede the necessity of experience, may serve to direct our inquiries, and, in the midst of affairs, give an order and a method for the arrangement of particulars that occur to our observation.

When I recollect what the President Montesquieu has written, I am at a loss to tell, why I should treat of human affairs: But I too am instigated by my reflections, and my sentiments; and

and I may utter them more to the comprehenſion of ordinary capacities, becauſe I am more on the level of ordinary men. If it be neceſſary to pave the way for what follows on the general hiſtory of nations, by giving ſome account of the heads under which various forms of government may be conveniently ranged, the reader ſhould perhaps be referred to what has been already delivered on the ſubject by this profound politician and amiable moraliſt. In his writings will be found, not only the original of what I am now, for the ſake of order, to copy from him, but likewiſe probably the ſource of many obſervations, which, in different places, I may, under the belief of invention, have repeated, without quoting their author.

The ancient philoſophers treated of government commonly under three heads; the Democratic, the Ariſtocratic, and the Deſpotic. Their attention was chiefly occupied with the varieties of republican government; and they paid little regard to a very important diſtinction, which Mr Monteſquieu has made, between deſpotiſm and monarchy. He too has conſidered government as reducible to three general forms; and, "to underſtand the nature of "each," he obſerves, "it is ſufficient to recall "ideas which are familiar with men of the leaſt re-"flection, who admit three definitions, or rather "three facts: That a republic is a ſtate in which "the people in a collective body, or a part of the "people, poſſeſs the ſovereign power: That mo-

"narchy

"narchy is that in which one man governs, according to fixed and determinate laws: And a despotism is that in which one man, without law, or rule of administration, by the mere impulse of will or caprice, decides, and carries every thing before him."

Republics admit of a very material distinction, which is pointed out in the general definition; that between democracy and aristocracy. In the first, supreme power remains in the hands of the collective body. Every office of magistracy, at the nomination of this sovereign, is open to every citizen; who, in the discharge of his duty, becomes the minister of the people, and accountable to them for every object of his trust.

In the second, the sovereignty is lodged in a particular class, or order of men; who, being once named, continue for life; or by the hereditary distinctions of birth and fortune, are advanced to a station of permanent superiority. From this order, and by their nomination, all the offices of magistracy are filled; and in the different assemblies which they constitute, whatever relates to the legislation, the execution, or jurisdiction, is finally determined.

Mr Montesquieu has pointed out the sentiments or maxims from which men must be supposed to act under these different governments.

In democracy, they muſt love equality; they muſt reſpect the rights of their fellow-citizens; they muſt unite by the common ties of affection to the ſtate. In forming perſonal pretenſions, they muſt be ſatisfied with that degree of conſideration they can procure by their abilities fairly meaſured with thoſe of an opponent; they muſt labour for the public without hope of profit; they muſt reject every attempt to create a perſonal dependence. Candour, force, and elevation of mind, in ſhort, are the props of democracy; and virtue is the principle of conduct required to its preſervation.

How beautiful a pre-eminence on the ſide of popular government? and how ardently ſhould mankind wiſh for the form, if it tended to eſtabliſh the principle, or were, in every inſtance, a ſure indication of its preſence!

But perhaps we muſt have poſſeſſed the principle, in order, with any hopes of advantage, to receive the form; and where the firſt is entirely extinguiſhed, the other may be fraught with evil, if any additional evil deſerves to be ſhunned where men are already unhappy.

At Conſtantinople or Algiers, it is a miſerable ſpectacle when men pretend to act on a foot of equality: They only mean to ſhake off the reſtraints of government,

government, and to seize as much as they can of that spoil, which, in ordinary times, is ingrossed by the master they serve.

It is one advantage of democracy, that the principal ground of distinction being personal qualities, men are classed according to their abilities, and to the merit of their actions. Though all have equal pretensions to power, yet the state is actually governed by a few. The majority of the people, even in their capacity of sovereign, only pretend to employ their senses; to feel, when pressed by national inconveniences, or threatened by public dangers; and with the ardour which is apt to arise in crouded assemblies, to urge the pursuits in which they are engaged, or to repel the attacks with which they are menaced.

The most perfect equality of rights can never exclude the ascendant of superior minds, nor the assemblies of a collective body govern without the direction of select councils. On this account, popular government may be confounded with aristocracy. But this alone does not constitute the character of aristocratical government. Here the members of the state are divided, at least, into two classes; of which one is destined to command, the other to obey. No merits or defects can raise or sink a person from one class to the other. The only effect of personal character is, to procure to the individual a suitable degree of consideration with his own order,

order, not to vary his rank. In one ſituation he is taught to aſſume, in another to yield the pre-eminence. He occupies the ſtation of patron or client, and is either the ſovereign or the ſubject of his country. The whole citizens may unite in executing the plans of ſtate, but never in deliberating on its meaſures, or enacting its laws. What belongs to the whole people under democracy, is here confined to a part. Members of the ſuperior order, are among themſelves, poſſibly, claſſed according to their abilities, but retain a perpetual aſcendant over thoſe of inferior ſtation. They are at once the ſervants and the maſters of the ſtate, and pay with their perſonal attendance and with their blood, for the civil or military honours they enjoy.

To maintain for himſelf, and to admit in his fellow-citizen, a perfect equality of privilege and ſtation, is no longer the leading maxim of the member of ſuch a community. The rights of men are modified by their condition. One order claims more than it is willing to yield; the other muſt be ready to yield what it does not aſſume to itſelf: and it is with good reaſon that Mr Monteſquieu gives to the principle of ſuch governments the name of *moderation* not of *virtue*.

The elevation of one claſs is a moderated arrogance; the ſubmiſſion of the other a limited deference. The firſt muſt be careful, by concealing the invidious part of their diſtinction, to palliate what

what is grievous in the public arrangement, and by their education, their cultivated manners, and improved talents, to appear qualified for the stations they occupy. The other must be taught to yield, from respect and personal attachment, what could not otherwise be extorted by force. When this moderation fails on either side, the constitution totters. A populace enraged to mutiny, may claim the right of equality to which they are admitted in democratical states; or a nobility bent on dominion, may chuse among themselves, or find already pointed out to them, a sovereign, who, by advantages of fortune, popularity, or abilities, is ready to seize for his own family, that envied power, which has already carried his order beyond the limits of moderation, and infected particular men with a boundless ambition.

MONARCHIES have accordingly been found with the recent marks of aristocracy. There, however, the monarch is only the first among the nobles; he must be satisfied with a limited power; his subjects are ranged into classes; he finds on every quarter a pretence to privilege, that circumscribes his authority; and he finds a force sufficient to confine his administration within certain bounds of equity, and determinate laws.

UNDER such governments, however, the love of equality is preposterous, and moderation itself is unnecessary. The object of every rank is prece-

dency, and every order may difplay its advantages to their full extent. The fovereign himfelf owes great part of his authority to the founding titles and the dazzling equipage which he exhibits in public. The fubordinate ranks lay claim to importance by a like exhibition, and for that purpofe carry in every inftant the enfigns of their birth, or the ornaments of their fortune. What elfe could mark out to the individual the relation in which he ftands to his fellow-fubjects, or diftinguifh the numberlefs ranks that fill up the interval between the ftate of the fovereign and that of the peafant? Or what elfe could, in ftates of a great extent, preferve any appearance of order, among members difunited by ambition and intereft, and deftined to form a community, without the fenfe of any common concern?

MONARCHIES are generally found, where the ftate is enlarged in population and in territory, beyond the numbers and dimenfions that are confiftent with republican government. Together with thefe circumftances, great inequalities arife in the diftribution of property; and the defire of pre-eminence becomes the predominant paffion. Every rank would exercife its prerogative, and the fovereign is perpetually tempted to enlarge his own; if fubjects, who defpair of precedence, plead for equality, he is willing to favour their claims, and to aid them in reducing pretenfions, with which he himfelf is, on many occafions, obliged to contend. In the event of fuch a policy, many invidious diftinctions

tions and grievances peculiar to monarchical government, may, in appearance, be removed; but the ſtate of equality to which the ſubjects approach, is that of ſlaves, equally dependent on the will of a maſter, not that of freemen in a condition to maintain their own.

THE principle of monarchy, according to Monteſquieu, is honour. Men may poſſeſs good qualities, elevation of mind, and fortitude; but the ſenſe of equality, that will bear no incroachment on the perſonal rights of the meaneſt citizen; the indignant ſpirit, that will not court a protection, nor accept as a favour, what is due as a right; the public affection, which is founded on the neglect of perſonal conſiderations, are neither conſiſtent with the preſervation of the conſtitution, nor agreeable to the habits acquired in any ſtation aſſigned to its members.

EVERY condition is poſſeſſed of peculiar dignity, and points out a propriety of conduct, which men of ſtation are obliged to maintain. In the commerce of ſuperiors and inferiors, it is the object of ambition, and of vanity, to refine on the advantages of rank; while, to facilitate the intercourſe of polite ſociety, it is the aim of good breeding to diſguiſe, or reject them.

THOUGH the objects of conſideration are rather the dignities of ſtation than perſonal qualities; though friendſhip

friendſhip cannot be formed by mere inclination, nor alliances by the mere choice of the heart; yet men ſo united, and even without changing their order, are highly ſuſceptible of moral excellence, or liable to many different degrees of corruption. They may act a vigorous part as members of the ſtate, an amiable one in the commerce of private ſociety; or they may yield up their dignity as citizens, even while they raiſe their arrogance and preſumption as private parties.

In monarchy, all orders of men derive their honours from the crown; but they continue to hold them as a right, and they exerciſe a ſubordinate power in the ſtate, founded on the permanent rank they enjoy, and on the attachment of thoſe whom they are appointed to lead and protect. Though they do not force themſelves into national councils, and public aſſemblies, and though the name of ſenate is unknown; yet the ſentiments they adopt muſt have weight with the ſovereign; and every individual, in his ſeparate capacity, in ſome meaſure, deliberates for his country. In whatever does not derogate from his rank, he has an arm ready to ſerve the community; in whatever alarms his ſenſe of honour, he has averſions and diſlikes, which amount to a negative on the will of his prince.

Intangled together by the reciprocal ties of dependence and protection, though not combined by the ſenſe of a common intereſt, the ſubjects of monarchy,

monarchy, like those of republics, find themselves occupied as the members of an active society, and engaged to treat with their fellow-creatures on a liberal footing. If those principles of honour which save the individual from servility in his own person, or from becoming an engine of oppression in the hands of another, should fail; if they should give way to the maxims of commerce, to the refinements of a supposed philosophy, or to the misplaced ardours of a republican spirit; if they are betrayed by the cowardice of subjects, or subdued by the ambition of princes; what must become of the nations of Europe?

Despotism is monarchy corrupted, in which a court and a prince in appearance remain, but in which every subordinate rank is destroyed; in which the subject is told, that he has no rights; that he cannot possess any property, nor fill any station, independent of the momentary will of his prince. These doctrines are founded on the maxims of conquest; they must be inculcated with the whip and the sword; and are best received under the terror of chains and imprisonment. Fear, therefore, is the principle which qualifies the subject to occupy his station: and the sovereign, who holds out the ensigns of terror so freely to others, has abundant reason to give this passion a principal place with himself. That tenure which he has devised for the rights of others, is soon applied to his own; and from his eager desire to secure, or to extend his power,

power, he finds it become, like the fortunes of his people, a creature of mere imagination and unsettled caprice.

Whilst we thus, with so much accuracy, can assign the ideal limits that may distinguish constitutions of government, we find them, in reality, both in respect to the principle and the form, variously blended together. In what society are not men classed by external distinctions, as well as personal qualities? In what state are they not actuated by a variety of principles; justice, honour, moderation, and fear? It is the purpose of science, not to disguise this confusion in its object, but, in the multiplicity and combination of particulars, to find the principal points which deserve our attention; and which, being well understood, save us from the embarassment which the varieties of singular cases might otherwise create. In the same degree in which governments require men to act from principles of virtue, of honour, or of fear, they are more or less fully comprised under the heads of republic, monarchy, or despotism, and the general theory is more or less applicable to their particular case.

Forms of government, in fact, mutually approach or recede by many, and often insensible gradations. Democracy, by admitting certain inequalities of rank, approaches to aristocracy. In popular, as well as aristocratical governments, particular men, by their personal authority, and sometimes by

by the credit of their family, have maintained a species of monarchical power. The monarch is limited in different degrees: Even the despotic prince is only that monarch whose subjects claim the fewest privileges, or who is himself best prepared to subdue them by force. All these varieties are but steps in the history of mankind, and mark the fleeting and transient situations through which they have passed, while supported by virtue, or depressed by vice.

PERFECT democracy and despotism appear to be the opposite extremes at which constitutions of government farthest recede from each other. Under the first, a perfect virtue is required; under the second, a total corruption is supposed: Yet in point of mere form, there being nothing fixed in the ranks and distinctions of men, beyond the casual and temporary possession of power, societies easily pass from a condition in which every individual has an equal title to reign, into one in which they are equally destined to serve. The same qualities in both, courage, popularity, address, and military conduct, raise the ambitious to eminence. With these qualities, the citizen or the slave easily passes from the ranks to the command of an army, from an obscure to an illustrious station. In either, a single person may rule with unlimited sway; and in both, the populace may break down every barrier of order, and restraint of law.

If we suppose that the equality established among the subjects of a despotic state, has inspired its

members with confidence, intrepidity, and the love of juſtice; the deſpotic prince, having ceaſed to be an object of fear, muſt ſink among the croud. If, on the contrary, the perſonal equality which is enjoyed by the members of a democratical ſtate, ſhould be valued merely as an equal pretenſion to the objects of avarice and ambition, the monarch may ſtart up anew, and be ſupported by thoſe who mean to ſhare in his profits. When the rapacious and mercenary aſſemble in parties, it is of no conſequence under what leader they inliſt, whether Cæſar or Pompey; the hopes of rapine or pay are the only motives from which they become attached to either.

In the diſorder of corrupted ſocieties, the ſcene has been frequently changed from democracy to deſpotiſm, and from the laſt too, in its turn, to the firſt. From amidſt the democracy of corrupt men, and from a ſcene of lawleſs confuſion, the tyrant aſcends a throne with arms reeking in blood. But his abuſes, or his weakneſſes, in the ſtation he has gained, in their turn awaken and give way to the ſpirit of mutiny and revenge. The cries of murder and deſolation, which in the ordinary courſe of military government terrified the ſubject in his private retreat, ſound through the vaults, and pierce the grates and iron doors of the ſeraglio. Democracy ſeems to revive in a ſcene of wild diſorder and tumult: But both the extremes are but the tranſient fits of paroxyſm or languor in a diſtempered ſtate.

If men be any where arrived at this meafure of depravity, there appears no immediate hope of redrefs. Neither the afcendancy of the multitude, nor that of the tyrant, will fecure the adminiftration of juftice: Neither the licence of mere tumult, nor the calm of dejection and fervitude, will teach the citizen that he was born for candour and affection to his fellow-creatures. And if the fpeculative would find that habitual ftate of war which they are fometimes pleafed to honour with the name of *the ftate of nature*, they will find it in the conteft that fubfifts between the defpotical prince and his fubjects, not in the firft approaches of a rude and fimple tribe to the condition and the domeftic arrangement of nations.

PART SECOND.

OF THE HISTORY OF RUDE NATIONS.

SECTION I.

Of the Informations on this ſubject which are derived from Antiquity.

THE hiſtory of mankind is confined within a limited period, and from every quarter brings an intimation that human affairs have had a beginning. Nations, diſtinguiſhed by the poſſeſſion of arts, and the felicity of their political eſtabliſhments, have been derived from a feeble original, and ſtill preſerve in their ſtory the indications of a ſlow and gradual progreſs, by which this diſtinction was gained. The antiquities of every people, however diverſified, and however diſguiſed, contain the ſame information on this point.

In ſacred hiſtory, we find the parents of the ſpecies, as yet a ſingle pair, ſent forth to inherit the earth, and to force a ſubſiſtence for themſelves amidſt the briers and thorns which were made to abound on its ſurface. Their race, which was again reduced to a few, had to ſtruggle with the dangers that await a weak and infant ſpecies; and after many ages elapſed, the moſt reſpectable nations took their riſe from one or a few families that had paſtured their flocks in the deſert.

The Grecians derive their own origin from unſettled tribes, whoſe frequent migrations are a proof of the rude and infant ſtate of their communities; and whoſe warlike exploits, ſo much celebrated in ſtory, only exhibit the ſtruggles with which they diſputed the poſſeſſion of a country they afterwards, by their talent for fable, by their arts, and their policy, rendered ſo famous in the hiſtory of mankind.

Italy muſt have been divided into many rude and feeble cantons, when a band of robbers, as we are taught to conſider them, found a ſecure ſettlement on the banks of the Tiber, and when a people, yet compoſed only of one ſex, ſuſtained the character of a nation. Rome, for many ages, ſaw, from her walls, on every ſide, the territory of her enemies, and found as little to check or to ſtifle the weakneſs of her infant power, as ſhe did afterwards to reſtrain the progreſs of her extended em-

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pire. Like a Tartar or a Scythian horde, which had pitched on a ſettlement, this naſcent community was equal, if not ſuperior, to every tribe in its neighbourhood; and the oak which has covered the field with its ſhade, was once a feeble plant in the nurſery, and not to be diſtinguiſhed from the weeds by which its early growth was reſtrained.

The Gauls and the Germans are come to our knowledge with the marks of a ſimilar condition; and the inhabitants of Britain, at the time of the firſt Roman invaſions, reſembled, in many things, the preſent natives of North America: They were ignorant of agriculture; they painted their bodies; and uſed for cloathing the ſkins of beaſts.

Such, therefore, appears to have been the commencement of hiſtory with all nations, and in ſuch circumſtances are we to look for the original character of mankind. The inquiry refers to a diſtant period, and every concluſion ſhould build on the facts which are preſerved for our uſe. Our method, notwithſtanding, too frequently, is to reſt the whole on conjecture; to impute every advantage of our nature to thoſe arts which we ourſelves poſſeſs; and to imagine, that a mere negation of all our virtues is a ſufficient deſcription of man in his original ſtate. We are ourſelves the ſuppoſed ſtandards of politeneſs and civilization; and where our own features do not appear, we apprehend, that there is nothing which deſerves to be known. But it is probable

probable that here, as in many other cafes we are ill qualified, from our fuppofed knowledge of caufes, to prognofticate effects, or to determine what muft have been the properties and operations, even of our own nature, in the abfence of thofe circumftances in which we have feen it engaged. Who would, from mere conjecture, fuppofe, that the naked favage would be a coxcomb and a gamefter? that he would be proud or vain, without the diftinctions of title and fortune? and that his principal care would be to adorn his perfon, and to find an amufement? Even if it could be fuppofed that he would thus fhare in our vices, and, in the midft of his foreft, vie with the follies which are practifed in the town; yet no one would be fo bold as to affirm, that he would likewife, in any inftance, excel us in talents and virtues; that he would have a penetration, a force of imagination and elocution, an ardour of mind, an affection and courage, which the arts, the difcipline, and the policy of few nations would be able to improve. Yet thefe particulars are a part in the defcription which is delivered by thofe who have had opportunities of feeing mankind in their rudeft condition: and beyond the reach of fuch teftimony, we can neither fafely take, nor pretend to give, information on the fubject.

If conjectures and opinions formed at a diftance, have not fufficient authority in the hiftory of mankind, the domeftic antiquities of every nation muft for this very reafon, be received with caution. They

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are, for most part, the mere conjectures or the fictions of subsequent ages; and even where at first they contained some resemblance of truth, they still vary with the imagination of those by whom they are transmitted, and in every generation receive a different form. They are made to bear the stamp of the times through which they have passed in the form of tradition, not of the ages to which their pretended descriptions relate. The information they bring, is not like the light reflected from a mirrour, which delineates the object from which it originally came; but, like rays that come broken and dispersed from an opaque or unpolished surface, only give the colours and features of the body from which they were last reflected.

When traditionary fables are rehearsed by the vulgar, they bear the marks of a national character; and though mixed with absurdities, often raise the imagination, and move the heart: when made the materials of poetry, and adorned by the skill and the eloquence of an ardent and superior mind, they instruct the understanding, as well as engage the passions. It is only in the management of mere antiquaries, or stript of the ornaments which the laws of history forbid them to wear, that they become even unfit to amuse the fancy, or to serve any purpose whatever.

It were absurd to quote the fable of the Iliad or the Odyssey, the legends of Hercules, Theseus, or OEdipus,

OEdipus, as authorities in matter of fact relating to the history of mankind; but they may, with great justice, be cited to ascertain what were the conceptions and sentiments of the age in which they were composed, or to characterise the genius of that people, with whose imaginations they were blended, and by whom they were fondly rehearsed and admired.

In this manner fiction may be admitted to vouch for the genius of nations, while history has nothing to offer that is intitled to credit. The Greek fable accordingly conveying a character of its authors, throws light on some ages of which no other record remains. The superiority of this people is indeed in no circumstance more evident than in the strain of their fictions, and in the story of those fabulous heroes, poets, and sages, whose tales, being invented or imbellished by an imagination already filled with the subject for which the hero was celebrated, served to inflame that ardent enthusiasm with which so many different republics afterwards proceeded in the pursuit of every national object.

It was no doubt of great advantage to those nations, that their system of fable was original, and being already received in popular traditions, served to diffuse those improvements of reason, imagination, and sentiment, which were afterwards, by men of the finest talents, made on the fable itself, or conveyed in its moral. The passions of the poet pervaded the minds of the people, and the conceptions

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of men of genius being communicated to the vulgar, became the incentives of a national ſpirit.

A MYTHOLOGY borrowed from abroad, a literature founded on references to a ſtrange country, and fraught with foreign alluſions, are much more confined in their uſe: They ſpeak to the learned alone; and though intended to inform the underſtanding, and to mend the heart, may, by being confined to a few, have an oppoſite effect: They may foſter conceit on the ruins of common ſenſe, and render what was, at leaſt innocently, ſung by the Athenian mariner at his oar, or rehearſed by the ſhepherd in attending his flock, an occaſion of vice, or the foundation of pedantry and ſcholaſtic pride.

OUR very learning, perhaps, where its influence extends, ſerves, in ſome meaſure, to depreſs our national ſpirit. Our literature being derived from nations of a different race, who flouriſhed at a time when our anceſtors were in a ſtate of barbarity, and conſequently when they were deſpiſed by thoſe who had attained to the literary arts, has given riſe to a humbling opinion, that we ourſelves are the offſpring of mean and contemptible nations, with whom the human imagination and ſentiment had no effect, till the genius was in a manner inſpired by examples, and directed by leſſons that were brought from abroad. The Romans, from whom our accounts are chiefly derived, have admitted, in the rudeneſs of their own anceſtors, a ſyſtem of vir-

tues, which all ſimple nations perhaps equally poſ-ſeſs; a contempt of riches, love of their country, patience of hardſhip, danger, and fatigue. They have, notwithſtanding, vilified our anceſtors for having reſembled their own; at leaſt, in the defect of their arts, and in the neglect of conveniencies which thoſe arts are employed to procure.

It is from the Greek and the Roman hiſtorians, however, that we have not only the moſt authentic and inſtructive, but even the moſt engaging, repre-ſentations of the tribes from whom we deſcend. Thoſe ſublime and intelligent writers underſtood human nature, and could collect its features, and exhibit its characters in every ſituation. They were ill ſucceeded in this taſk by the early hiſtorians of modern Europe; who, generally bred to the pro-feſſion of monks, and confined to the monaſtic life, applied themſelves to record what they were pleaſed to denominate facts, while they ſuffered the pro-ductions of genius to periſh, and were unable, either by the matter they ſelected, or the ſtyle of their com-poſitions, to give any repreſentation of the active ſpirit of mankind in any condition. With them, a narration was ſuppoſed to conſtitute hiſtory, whilſt it did not convey any knowledge of men; and hiſto-ry itſelf was allowed to be complete, while, amidſt the events and the ſucceſſion of princes that are re-corded in the order of time, we are left to look in vain for thoſe characteriſtics of the underſtanding

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and the heart, which alone, in every human transaction, render the story either engaging or useful.

We therefore willingly quit the history of our early ancestors, where Cæsar and Tacitus have dropped them; and perhaps, till we come within the reach of what is connected with present affairs, and makes a part in the system on which we now proceed, have little reason to expect any subject to interest or inform the mind. We have no reason, however, from hence to conclude, that the matter itself was more barren, or the scene of human affairs less interesting, in modern Europe, than it has been on every stage where mankind were engaged to exhibit the movements of the heart, the efforts of generosity, magnanimity, and courage.

The trial of what those ages contained, is not even fairly made, when men of genius and distinguished abilities, with the accomplishments of a learned and a polished age, collect the materials they have found, and, with the greatest success, connect the story of illiterate ages with transactions of a later date: It is difficult even for them, under the names which are applied in a new state of society, to convey a just apprehension of what mankind were in situations so different, and in times so remote from their own.

In deriving from historians of this character the instruction which their writings are fit to bestow, we are frequently to forget the general terms that

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are employed, in order to collect the real manners of an age, from the minute circumstances that are occasionally presented. The titles of *Royal* and *Noble* were applicable to the families of Tarquin, Collatinus, and Cincinnatus; but Lucretia was employed in domestic industry with her maids, and Cincinnatus followed the plough. The dignities, and even the offices, of civil society, were known many ages ago, in Europe, by their present appellations; but we find in the history of England, that a King and his court being assembled to solemnize a festival, an outlaw, who had subsisted by robbery, came to share in the feast. The King himself arose to force this unworthy guest from the company, a scuffle ensued between them, and the King was killed*. A chancellor and prime minister, whose magnificence and sumptuous furniture were the subject of admiration and envy, had his apartments covered every day in winter with clean straw and hay, and in summer with green rushes or boughs. Even the sovereign himself, in those ages, was provided with forage for his bed†. These picturesque features and characteristical strokes of the times, recal the imagination from the supposed distinction of monarch and subject, to that state of rough familiarity in which our ancestors lived, and under which they acted, with a view to objects, and on principles

* Hume's History, ch. 8. p. 278.

† Ibid. p. 73.

of conduct, which we seldom comprehend, when we are employed to record their transactions, or to study their characters.

THUCYDIDES, notwithstanding the prejudice of his country against the name of *Barbarian*, understood that it was in the customs of barbarous nations he was to study the more ancient manners of Greece.

THE Romans might have found an image of their own ancestors, in the representations they have given of ours: And if ever an Arab clan shall become a civilized nation, or any American tribe escape the poison which is administered by our traders of Europe, it may be from the relations of the present times, and the descriptions which are now given by travellers, that such a people, in after ages, may best collect the accounts of their origin. It is in their present condition, that we are to behold, as in a mirror, the features of our own progenitors; and from thence we are to draw our conclusions with respect to the influence of situations, in which, we have reason to believe that our fathers were placed.

WHAT should distinguish a German or a Briton, in the habits of his mind or his body, in his manners or apprehensions, from an American, who, like him, with his bow and his dart, is left to traverse the forest; and in a like severe or variable climate, is obliged to subsist by the chace?

If, in advanced years, we would form a juſt notion of our progreſs from the cradle, we muſt have recourſe to the nurſery, and from the example of thoſe who are ſtill in the period of life we mean to deſcribe, take our repreſentation of paſt manners, that cannot, in any other way, be recalled.

SECT.

SECT. II.

Of Rude Nations prior to the Eſtabliſhment of Property.

FRom one to the other extremity of America; from Kamſchatka weſtward to the river Oby, and from the Northern ſea, over that length of country, to the confines of China, of India, and Perſia; from the Caſpian to the Red ſea, with little exception, and from thence over the inland continent and the weſtern ſhores of Africa; we every where meet with nations on whom we beſtow the appellations of barbarous or ſavage. That extenſive tract of the earth, containing ſo great a variety of ſituation, climate, and ſoil, ſhould, in the manners of its inhabitants, exhibit all the diverſities which ariſes from the unequal influence of the ſun, joined to a different nouriſhment and manner of life. Every queſtion, however, on this ſubject is premature, till we have firſt endeavoured to form ſome general conception of our ſpecies in its rude ſtate, and have learned to diſtinguiſh mere ignorance from dullneſs, and the want of arts from the want of capacity.

Of the nations who dwell in thoſe, or any other of the leſs cultivated parts of the earth, ſome intruſt their ſubſiſtence chiefly to hunting, fiſhing, or the natural produce of the ſoil. They have little attention to property, and ſcarcely any beginnings of ſubordination

dination or government. Others having possessed themselves of herbs, and depending for their provision on pasture, know what it is to be poor and rich. They know the relations of patron and client, of servant and master, and by the measures of fortune determine their station. This distinction must create a material difference of character, and may furnish two separate heads, under which to consider the history of mankind in their rudest state; that of the savage, who is not yet acquainted with property; and that of the barbarian, to whom it is, although not ascertained by laws, a principal object of care and desire.

It must appear very evident, that property is a matter of progress. It requires, among other particulars which are the effects of time, some method of defining possession. The very desire of it proceeds from experience; and the industry by which it is gained, or improved, requires such a habit of acting with a view to distant objects, as may overcome the present disposition either to sloth or to enjoyment. This habit is slowly acquired, and is in reality a principal distinction of nations in the advanced state of mechanic and commercial arts.

In a tribe which subsists by hunting and fishing, the arms, the utensils, and the fur, which the individual carries, are to him the only subjects of property. The food of to-morrow is yet wild in the forest, or hid in the lake; it cannot be appropriated

priated before it is caught; and even then, being the purchaſe of numbers, who fiſh or hunt in a body, it accrues to the community, and is applied to immediate uſe, or becomes an acceſſion to the ſtores of the public.

WHERE ſavage nations, as in moſt parts of America, mix with the practice of hunting ſome ſpecies of rude agriculture, they ſtill follow, with reſpect to the ſoil and the fruits of the earth, the analogy of their principal object. As the men hunt, ſo the women labour together; and, after they have ſhared the toils of the ſeed-time, they enjoy the fruits of the harveſt in common. The field in which they have planted, like the diſtrict over which they are accuſtomed to hunt, is claimed as a property by the nation, but is not parcelled in lots to its members. They go forth in parties to prepare the ground, to plant, and to reap. The harveſt is gathered into the public granary, and from thence, at ſtated times, is divided into ſhares for the maintenance of ſeparate families*. Even the returns of the market, when they trade with foreigners, are brought home to the ſtock of the nation†.

T As

* Hiſtory of the Caribbees.

† Charlevoix. This account of Rude Nations, in moſt points of importance, ſo far as it relates to the original North-Americans, is not founded ſo much on the teſtimony of this or of the other writers cited, as it is on the concurring repreſentations of living witneſſes, who in the courſe of trade, of war and of treaties

As the fur and the bow pertain to the individual, the cabbin and its utenſils are appropriated to the family; and as the domeſtic cares are committed to the women, ſo the property of the houſehold ſeems likewiſe to be veſted in them. The children are conſidered as pertaining to the mother, with little regard to deſcent on the father's ſide. The males, before they are married, remain in the cabbin in which they are born; but after they have formed a new connection with the other ſex, they change their habitation, and become an acceſſion to the family in which they have found their wives. The hunter and the warrior are numbered by the matron as a part of her treaſure; they are reſerved for perils and trying occaſions; and in the receſs of public councils, in the intervals of hunting or war, are maintained by the cares of the women, and loiter about in mere amuſement or ſloth*.

While one ſex continue to value themſelves chiefly on their courage, their talent for policy, and their warlike atchievements, this ſpecies of property which is beſtowed on the other, is in reality a mark of ſubjection; not, as ſome writers alledge, of their having acquired an aſcendant†. It is the care and

ties have had ample occaſion to obſerve the manners of that people. It is neceſſary, however, for the ſake of thoſe who may not have converſed with the living witneſſes to refer to printed authorities.

* Laſitau. † Ibid.

trouble

trouble of a ſubject with which the warrior does not chuſe to be embarraſſed. It is a ſervitude, and a continual toil, where no honours are won; and they whoſe province it is, are in fact the ſlaves and the helots of their country. If in this deſtination of the ſexes, while the men continue to indulge themſelves in the contempt of ſordid and mercenary arts, the cruel eſtabliſhment of ſlavery is for ſome ages deferred; if in this tender, though unequal alliance, the affections of the heart prevent the ſeverities practiſed on ſlaves; we have in the cuſtom itſelf, as perhaps in many other inſtances, reaſon to prefer the firſt ſuggeſtions of nature, to many of her after refinements.

If mankind, in any inſtance, continue the article of property on the footing we have now repreſented, we may eaſily credit what is further reported by travellers, that they admit of no diſtinctions of rank or condition; and that they have in fact no degree of ſubordination different from the diſtribution of function, which follows the differences of age, talents, and diſpoſitions. Perſonal qualities give an aſcendant in the midſt of occaſions which require their exertion; but in times of relaxation, leave no veſtige of power or prerogative. A warrior who has led the youth of his nation to the ſlaughter of their enemies, or who has been foremoſt in the chace, returns upon a level with the reſt of his tribe; and when the only buſineſs is to ſleep, or to feed,

feed, can enjoy no pre-eminence; for he sleeps and he feeds no better than they.

Where no profit attends dominion, one party is as much averse to the trouble of perpetual command, as the other is to the mortification of perpetual submission: "I love victory, I love great "actions," says Montesquieu, in the character of Sylla; "but have no relish for the languid detail "of pacific government, or the pageantry of high "station." He has touched perhaps what is a prevailing sentiment in the simplest state of society, when the weakness of motives suggested by interest, and the ignorance of any elevation not founded on merit, supplies the place of disdain.

The character of the mind, however, in this state, is not founded on ignorance alone. Men are conscious of their equality, and are tenacious of its rights. Even when they follow a leader to the field, they cannot brook the pretensions to a formal command: They listen to no orders; and they come under no military engagements, but those of mutual fidelity, and equal ardour in the enterprise*.

This description, we may believe, is unequally applicable to different nations, who have made unequal advances in the establishment of property. Among the Carribbees, and the other natives of the

* Charlevoix.

warmer

warmer climates in America, the dignity of chieftain is hereditary, or elective, and continued for life: The unequal distribution of property creates a visible subordination*. But among the Iroquois, and other nations of the temperate zone, the titles of *magistrate* and *subject*, of *noble* and *mean*, are as little known as those of *rich* and *poor*. The old men, without being invested with any coercive power, employ their natural authority in advising or in prompting the resolutions of their tribe: The military leader is pointed out by the superiority of his manhood and valour: The statesman is distinguished only by the attention with which his counsel is heard; the warrior by the confidence with which the youth of his nation follow him to the field: And if their concerts must be supposed to constitute a species of political government, it is one to which no language of ours can be applied. Power is no more than the natural ascendency of the mind; the discharge of office no more than a natural exercise of the personal character; and while the community acts with an appearance of order, there is no sense of disparity in the breast of any of its members †.

In these happy, though informal proceedings, where age alone gives a place in the council; where youth, ardour, and valour in the field, give a title to the station of leader; where the whole commu-

* Wafer's Account of the Isthmus of Darien.

† Colden's History of the Five Nations.

nity

nity is aſſembled on any alarming occaſion, we may venture to ſay, that we have found the origin of the ſenate, the executive power, and the aſſembly of the people; inſtitutions for which ancient legiſlators have been ſo much renowned. The ſenate among the Greeks, as well as the Latins, appears, from the etymology of its name, to have been originally compoſed of elderly men. The military leader at Rome, in a manner not unlike to that of the American warrior, proclaimed his levies, and the citizen prepared for the field, in conſequence of a voluntary engagement. The ſuggeſtions of nature, which directed the policy of nations in the wilds of America, were followed before on the banks of the Eurotas and the Tyber; and Lycurgus and Romulus found the model of their inſtitutions where the members of every rude nation find the earlieſt mode of uniting their talents, and combining their forces.

Among the North-American nations, every individual is independent; but he is engaged by his affections and his habits in the cares of a family. Families, like ſo many ſeparate tribes, are ſubject to no inſpection or government from abroad; whatever paſſes at home, even bloodſhed and murder, are only ſuppoſed to concern themſelves. They are, in the mean time, the parts of a canton; the women aſſemble to plant their maize; the old men go to council; the huntſman and the warrior joins the youth of his village in the field. Many ſuch cantons

cantons aſſemble to conſtitute a national council, or to execute a national enterpriſe. When the Europeans made their firſt ſettlements in America, ſix ſuch nations had formed a league, had their amphyctiones or ſtates-general, and, by the firmneſs of their union, and the ability of their councils, had obtained an aſcendant from the mouth of the St Laurence to that of the Miſſiſippi*. They appeared to underſtand the objects of the confederacy, as well as thoſe of the ſeparate nation; they ſtudied a balance of power; the ſtateſman of one country watched the deſigns and proceedings of another; and occaſionally threw the weight of his tribe into a different ſcale. They had their alliances and their treaties, which, like the nations of Europe, they maintained, or they broke, upon reaſons of ſtate; and remained at peace from a ſenſe of neceſſity or expediency, and went to war upon any emergence of provocation or jealouſy.

Thus, without any ſettled form of government, or any bond of union, but what reſembled more the ſuggeſtion of inſtinct, than the invention of reaſon, they conducted themſelves with the concert, and the force of nations. Foreigners, without being able to diſcover who is the magiſtrate, or in what manner the ſenate is compoſed, always find a council with whom they may treat, or a band of warriors with whom they may fight. Without po-

* Laſitau, Charlevoix, Colden, &c.

lice or compulsory laws, their domestic society is conducted with order, and the absence of vicious dispositions, is a better security than any public establishment for the suppression of crimes.

Disorders, however, sometimes occur, especially in times of debauch, when the immoderate use of intoxicating liquors, to which they are extremely addicted, suspends the ordinary caution of their demeanour, and inflaming their violent passions, engages them in quarrels and bloodshed. When a person is slain, his murderer is seldom called to an immediate account: But he has a quarrel to sustain with the family and the friends; or, if a stranger, with the countrymen of the deceased; sometimes even with his own nation at home, if the injury committed be of a kind to alarm the society. The nation, the canton, or the family, endeavour, by presents, to atone for the offence of any of their members; and, by pacifying the parties aggrieved, endeavour to prevent what alarms the community more than the first disorder, the subsequent effects of revenge and animosity*. The shedding of blood, however, if the guilty person remain where he has committed the crime, seldom escapes unpunished: The friend of the deceased knows how to disguise, though not to suppress his resentment; and even after many years have elapsed, is sure to repay the injury that was done to his kindred or his house.

* Lafitau.

THESE considerations render them cautious and circumspect, put them on their guard against their passions, and give to their ordinary deportment an air of phlegm and composure superior to what is possessed among polished nations. They are, in the mean time, affectionate in their carriage, and in their conversations pay a mutual attention and regard, says Charlevoix, more tender and more engaging, than what we profess in the ceremonial of polished societies.

THIS writer has observed, that the nations among whom he travelled in North America, never mentioned acts of generosity or kindness under the notion of duty. They acted from affection, as they acted from appetite, without regard to its consequences. When they had done a kindness, they had gratified a desire; the business was finished, and it passed from the memory. When they received a favour, it might, or it might not, prove the occasion of friendship: If it did not, the parties appeared to have no apprehensions of gratitude, as a duty by which the one was bound to make a return, or the other intitled to reproach the person who had failed in his part. The spirit with which they give or receive presents, is the same which Tacitus observed among the ancient Germans: They delight in them, but do not consider them as matter of obligation*. Such gifts are of little

* Muneribus gaudent, sed nec data imputant, nec acceptis obligantur.

consequence, except when employed as the seal of a bargain or treaty.

It was their favourite maxim, That no man is naturally indebted to another; that he is not, therefore, obliged to bear with any imposition, or unequal treatment*. Thus, in a principle apparently sullen and inhospitable, they have discovered the foundation of justice, and observe its rules, with a steadiness and candour which no cultivation has been found to improve. The freedom which they give in what relates to the supposed duties of kindness and friendship, serves only to engage the heart more entirely, where it is once possessed with affection. We love to chuse our object without any restraint, and we consider kindness itself as a task, when the duties of friendship are exacted by rule. We therefore, by our demand for attentions, rather corrupt than improve the system of morality; and by our exactions of gratitude, and our frequent proposals to inforce its observance, we only shew that we have mistaken its nature; we only give symptoms of that growing sensibility to interest, from which we measure the expediency of friendship and generosity itself; and by which we would introduce the spirit of traffic into the commerce of affection. In consequence of this proceeding, we are often obliged to decline a favour with the same spirit that we throw off a servile engagement, or reject a bribe. To the unrefining savage every fa-

* Charlevoix.

vour is welcome, and every present received without reserve or reflection.

The love of equality, and the love of justice, were originally the same: And although, by the constitution of different societies, unequal privileges are bestowed on their members; and although justice itself requires a proper regard to be paid to such privileges; yet he who has forgotten that men were originally equal, easily degenerates into a slave; or in the capacity of a master, is not to be trusted with the rights of his fellow-creatures. This happy principle gives to the mind its sense of independence, renders it indifferent to the favours which are in the power of other men, checks it in the commission of injuries, and leaves the heart open to the affections of generosity and kindness. It gives to the untutored American that sentiment of candour, and of regard to the welfare of others, which, in some degree, softens the arrogant pride of his carriage, and in times of confidence and peace, without the assistance of government or law, renders the approach and commerce of strangers secure.

Among this people, the foundations of honour are eminent abilities and great fortitude; not the distinctions of equipage and fortune: The talents in esteem are such as their situation leads them to employ, the exact knowledge of a country, and stratagem in war. On these qualifications, a captain among the Caribbees underwent an examination.

When

When a new leader was to be chofen, a fcout was fent forth to traverfe the forefts which led to the enemy's country, and upon his return, the candidate was defired to find the track in which he had travelled. A brook, or a fountain, was named to him on the frontier, and he was defired to find the neareft path to a particular ftation, and to plant a ftake in the place*. They can, accordingly, trace a wild beaft, or the human foot, over many leagues of a pathlefs foreft, and find their way acrofs a woody and uninhabited continent, by means of refined obfervations, which efcape the traveller who has been accuftomed to different aids. They fteer in flender canoes, acrofs ftormy feas, with a dexterity equal to that of the moft experienced pilot†. They carry a penetrating eye for the thoughts and intentions of thofe with whom they have to deal; and when they mean to deceive, they cover themfelves with arts which the moft fubtile can feldom elude. They harangue in their public councils with a nervous and a figurative elocution; and conduct themfelves in the management of their treaties with a perfect difcernment of their national interefts.

Thus being able mafters in the detail of their own affairs, and well qualified to acquit themfelves on particular occafions, they ftudy no fcience, and go

* Lafitau. † Charlevoix.

in

in pursuit of no general principles. They even seem incapable of attending to any distant consequences, beyond those they have experienced in hunting or war. They intrust the provision of every season to itself; consume the fruits of the earth in summer; and, in winter, are driven in quest of their prey, through woods, and over deserts covered with snow. They do not form in one hour those maxims which may prevent the errors of the next; and they fail in those apprehensions, which, in the intervals of passion, produce ingenuous shame, compassion, remorse, or a command of appetite. They are seldom made to repent of any violence; nor is a person, indeed, thought accountable in his sober mood, for what he did in the heat of a passion, or in a time of debauch.

Their superstitions are groveling and mean: And did this happen among rude nations alone, we could not sufficiently admire the effects of politeness; but it is a subject on which few nations are intitled to censure their neighbours. When we have considered the superstitions of one people, we find little variety in those of another. They are but a repetition of similar weaknesses and absurdities, derived from a common source, a perplexed apprehension of invisible agents, that are supposed to guide all precarious events to which human foresight cannot extend.

In what depends on the known or the regular courſe of nature, the mind truſts to itſelf; but in ſtrange and uncommon ſituations, it is the dupe of its own perplexity, and, inſtead of relying on its prudence or courage, has recourſe to divination, and a variety of obſervances, that, for being irrational, are always the more revered. Superſtition being founded in doubts and anxiety, is foſtered by ignorance and myſtery. Its maxims, in the mean time, are not always confounded with thoſe of common life; nor does its weakneſs or folly always prevent the watchfulneſs, penetration, and courage, men are accuſtomed to employ in the management of common affairs. A Roman conſulting futurity by the pecking of birds, or a King of Sparta inſpecting the intrails of a beaſt, Mithridates conſulting his women on the interpretation of his dreams, are examples ſufficient to prove, that a childiſh imbecility on this ſubject is conſiſtent with the greateſt military and political conduct.

Confidence in the effect of charms is not peculiar to any age or nation. Few, even of the accompliſhed Greeks and Romans, were able to ſhake off this weakneſs. In their caſe, it was not removed by the higheſt meaſures of civilization. It has yielded only to the light of true religion, or to the ſtudy of nature, by which we are led to ſubſtitute a wiſe providence operating by phyſical cauſes, in the place of phantoms that terrify or amuſe the ignorant.

The

THE principal point of honour among the rude nations of America, as indeed in every instance where mankind are not greatly corrupted, is fortitude. Yet their way of maintaining this point of honour, is very different from that of the nations of Europe. Their ordinary method of making war is by ambuscade; and they strive, by overreaching an enemy, to commit the greatest slaughter, or to make the greatest number of prisoners, with the least hazard to themselves. They deem it a folly to expose their own persons in assaulting an enemy, and do not rejoice in victories which are stained with the blood of their own people. They do not value themselves, as in Europe, on defying their enemy upon equal terms. They even boast, that they approach like foxes, or that they fly like birds, not less than that they devour like lions. In Europe, to fall in battle is accounted an honour; among the natives of America, it is reckoned disgraceful*. They reserve their fortitude for the trials they abide when attacked by surprize, or when fallen into their enemies hands; and when they are obliged to maintain their own honour, and that of their own nation, in the midst of torments that require efforts of patience more than of valour.

ON these occasions, they are far from allowing it to be supposed that they wish to decline the conflict. It is held infamous to avoid it, even by a

* Charlevoix.

voluntary

voluntary death; and the greateſt affront which can be offered to a priſoner, is to refuſe him the honours of a man, in the manner of his execution. "With-hold," ſays an old man, in the midſt of his torture, "the ſtabs of your knife; rather "let me die by fire, that thoſe dogs, your allies, "from beyond the ſeas, may learn to ſuffer like "men*." With terms of defiance, the victim, in thoſe ſolemn trials, commonly excites the animoſity of his tormentors, as well as his own; and whilſt we ſuffer for human nature, under the effect of its errors, we muſt admire its force.

The people with whom this practice prevailed, were commonly deſirous of repairing their own loſſes, by adopting priſoners of war into their families: and even in the laſt moment, the hand which was raiſed to torment, frequently gave the ſign of adoption, by which the priſoner became the child or the brother of his enemy, and came to ſhare in all the privileges of a citizen. In their treatment of thoſe who ſuffered, they did not appear to be guided by principles of hatred or revenge: they obſerved the point of honour in applying as well as in bearing their torments; and, by a ſtrange kind of affection and tenderneſs, were directed to be moſt cruel where they intended the higheſt reſpect: the coward was put to immediate death by the hands of women: the valiant was ſuppoſed to be intitled

* Colden.

to

to all the trials of fortitude that men could invent or employ: "It gave me joy," says an old man to his captive, "that so gallant a youth was allotted "to my share: I proposed to have placed you on "the couch of my nephew, who was slain by your "countrymen; to have transferred all my tender-"ness to you; and to have solaced my age in your "company: But, maimed and mutilated as you "now appear, death is better than life: Prepare "yourself therefore to die like a man*."

It is perhaps with a view to these exhibitions, or rather in admiration of fortitude, the principle from which they proceed, that the Americans are so attentive, in their earliest years, to harden their nerves†. The children are taught to vie with each other in bearing the sharpest torments; the youth are admitted into the class of manhood, after violent proofs of their patience; and leaders are put to the test by famine, burning, and suffocation‡.

It might be apprehended, that among rude nations, where the means of subsistence are procured with so much difficulty, the mind could never raise itself above the consideration of this subject; and that man would, in this condition, give examples of

* Charlevoix.

† *Ib.* This writer says, that he has seen a boy and a girl, having bound their naked arms together, place a burning coal between them, to try who could endure it longest.

‡ Lafitau.

the meaneſt and moſt mercenary ſpirit. The reverſe, however, is true. Directed in this particular by the deſires of nature, men, in their ſimpleſt ſtate, attend to the objects of appetite no further than appetite requires; and their deſires of fortune extend no further than the meal which gratifies their hunger: they apprehend no ſuperiority of rank in the poſſeſſion of wealth, ſuch as might inſpire any habitual principle of covetouſneſs, vanity, or ambition: they can apply to no taſk that engages no immediate paſſion, and take pleaſure in no occupation that affords no dangers to be braved, and no honours to be won.

It was not among the ancient Romans alone that commercial arts, or a ſordid mind, were held in contempt. A like ſpirit prevails in every rude and independent ſociety. "I am a warrior, and not a "merchant," ſaid an American to the governor of Canada, who propoſed to give him goods in exchange for ſome priſoners he had taken; "your "cloaths and utenſils do not tempt me; but my "priſoners are now in your power, and you may "ſeize them: If you do, I muſt go forth and take "more priſoners, or periſh in the attempt; and "if that chance ſhould befal me, I ſhall die like a "man; but remember, that our nation will charge "you as the cauſe of my death*." With theſe apprehenſions, they have an elevation, and a ſtate-

* Charlevoix.

linefs of carriage, which the pride of nobility, where it is moft revered by polifhed nations, feldom beftows.

THEY are attentive to their perfons, and employ much time, as well as endure great pain, in the methods they take to adorn their bodies, to give the permanent ftains with which they are coloured, or preferve the paint, which they are perpetually repairing, in order to appear with advantage.

THEIR averfion to every fort of employment which they hold to be mean, makes them pafs great part of their time in idlenefs or fleep; and a man who, in purfuit of a wild beaft, or to furprife his enemy, will traverfe a hundred leagues on fnow, will not, to procure his food, fubmit to any fpecies of ordinary labour. "Strange," fays Tacitus, "that "the fame perfon fhould be fo much averfe to re- "pofe, and fo much addicted to floth*."

GAMES of hazard are not the invention of polifhed ages; men of curiofity have looked for their origin, in vain, among the monuments of an obfcure antiquity; and it is probable that they belonged to times too remote and too rude even for the conjectures of antiquarians to reach. The very favage brings his furs, his utenfils, and his beads, to the hazard-table: He finds here the paffions and

* Mira diverfitas naturæ, ut idem homines fic ament inertiam & oderint quietem.

agitations

agitations which the applications of a tedious induſtry could not excite: And while the throw is depending, he tears his hair, and beats his breaſt, with a rage which the more accompliſhed gameſter has ſometimes learned to repreſs: He often quits the party naked, and ſtripped of all his poſſeſſions; or where ſlavery is in uſe, ſtakes his freedom to have one chance more to recover his former loſs*.

With all theſe infirmities, vices, or reſpectable qualities, belonging to the human ſpecies in its rudeſt ſtate; the love of ſociety, friendſhip, and public affection, penetration, eloquence, and courage, appear to have been its original properties, not the ſubſequent effects of device or invention. If mankind are qualified to improve their manners, the materials to be improved were furniſhed by nature; and the effect of this improvement is not to inſpire the ſentiments of tenderneſs and generoſity, nor to beſtow the principal conſtituents of a reſpectable character, but to obviate the caſual abuſes of paſſion; and to prevent a mind, which feels the beſt diſpoſitions in their greateſt force, from being at times likewiſe the ſport of brutal appetite and of ungovernable violence.

Were Lycurgus employed anew to find a plan of government for the people we have deſcribed, he would find them, in many important particulars,

* Tacitus, Lafitau, Charlevoix.

prepared

prepared by nature herself to receive his institutions. His equality in matters of property being already established, he would have no faction to apprehend from the opposite interests of the poor and the rich; his senate, his assembly of the people, is constituted; his discipline is in some measure adopted; and the place of his helots is supplied by the task allotted to one of the sexes. With all these advantages, he would still have had a very important lesson for civil society to teach, that by which a few learn to command, and the many are taught to obey: He would have all his precautions to take against the future intrusion of mercenary arts, the admiration of luxury, and the passion for interest: He would still perhaps have a more difficult task than any of the former, in teaching his citizens the command of appetite, and an indifference to pleasure, as well as a contempt of pain; in teaching them to maintain in the field, the formality of uniform precautions, and as much to avoid being themselves surprized, as they endeavour to surprize their enemy.

For want of these advantages, rude nations in general, though they are patient of hardship and fatigue, though they are addicted to war, and are qualified by their stratagem and valour to throw terror into the armies of a more regular enemy; yet, in the course of a continual struggle, always yield to the superior arts, and the discipline of more civilized nations. Hence the Romans were able to over-

over-run the provinces of Gaul, Germany, and Britain; and hence the Europeans have a growing ascendency over the nations of Africa and America.

On the credit of a superiority which certain nations possess, they think that they have a claim to dominion; and even Cæsar appears to have forgotten what were the passions, as well as the rights of mankind, when he complained, that the Britons, after having sent him a submissive message to Gaul, perhaps to prevent his invasion, still pretended to fight for their liberties, and to oppose his descent on their island*.

There is not, perhaps, in the whole description of mankind, a circumstance more remarkable than that mutual contempt and aversion which nations, under a different state of commercial arts, bestow on each other. Addicted to their own pursuits, and considering their own condition as the standard of human felicity, all nations pretend to the preference, and in their practice give sufficient proof of sincerity. Even the savage still less than the citizen, can be made to quit that manner of life in which he is trained: He loves that freedom of mind which will not be bound to any task, and which owns no superior: However tempted to mix with polished nations, and to better his fortune, the first moment of liberty brings him back to the woods again; he

* Cæsar questus, quod quum ultro in continentem legatis missis pacem a se petissent, bellum sine causa intulissent. *Lib.* 4.

droops

droops and he pines in the streets of the populous city; he wanders dissatisfied over the open and the cultivated field; he seeks the frontier and the forest, where, with a constitution prepared to undergo the hardships and the difficulties of the situation, he enjoys a delicious freedom from care, and a seducing society, where no rules of behaviour are prescribed, but the simple dictates of the heart.

SECT.

SECT. III.

Of Rude Nations under the Impressions of Property and Interest.

IT was a proverbial imprecation in use among the hunting nations on the confines of Siberia, That their enemy might be obliged to live like a Tartar, and have the folly of troubling himself with the charge of cattle*. Nature, it seems, in their apprehension, by storing the woods and the desert with game, rendered the task of the herdsman unnecessary, and left to man only the trouble of selecting and of seizing his prey.

THE indolence of mankind, or rather their aversion to any application in which they are not engaged by immediate instinct and passion, retards the progress of industry and of impropriation. It has been found, however, even while the means of subsistence are left in common, and the stock of the public is yet undivided, that property is apprehended in different subjects; that the fur and the bow belong to the individual; and the cottage, with its furniture, are appropriated to the family.

WHEN the parent begins to desire a better provision for his children than is found under the pro-

* Abulgaze's Genealogical History of the Tartars.

miscuous

miſcuous management of many copartners, when he has applied his labour and his ſkill apart, he aims at an excluſive poſſeſſion, and ſeeks the property of the ſoil, as well as the uſe of its fruits.

When the individual no longer finds among his aſſociates the ſame inclination to commit every ſubject to public uſe, he is ſeized with concern for his perſonal fortune; and is alarmed by the cares which every perſon entertains for himſelf. He is urged as much by emulation and jealouſy, as by the ſenſe of neceſſity. He ſuffers conſiderations of intereſt to reſt on his mind, and when every preſent appetite is ſufficiently gratified, he can act with a view to futurity, or rather finds an object of vanity in having amaſſed what is become a ſubject of competition, and a matter of univerſal eſteem. Upon this motive, where violence is reſtrained, he can apply his hand to lucrative arts, confine himſelf to a tedious taſk, and wait with patience for the diſtant returns of his labour.

Thus mankind acquire induſtry by many and by ſlow degrees. They are taught to regard their intereſt; they are reſtrained from rapine; and they are ſecured in the poſſeſſion of what they fairly obtain; by theſe methods the habits of the labourer, the mechanic, and the trader, are gradually formed. A hoard, collected from the ſimple productions of nature, or a herd of cattle, are, in every rude nation, the firſt ſpecies of wealth.

The circumſtances of the ſoil, and the climate, determine whether the inhabitant ſhall apply himſelf chiefly to agriculture or paſture; whether he ſhall fix his reſidence, or be moving continually about with all his poſſeſſions.

In the weſt of Europe; in America, from ſouth to north, with a few exceptions; in the torrid zone, and every where within the warmer climates; mankind have generally applied themſelves to ſome ſpecies of agriculture, and have been diſpoſed to ſettlement. In the north and middle region of Aſia, they depended entirely on their herds, and were perpetually ſhifting their ground in ſearch of new paſture. The arts which pertain to ſettlement have been practiſed, and variouſly cultivated, by the inhabitants of Europe. Thoſe which are conſiſtent with perpetual migration, have, from the earlieſt accounts of hiſtory, remained nearly the ſame with the Scythian or Tartar. The tent pitched on a moveable carriage, the horſe applied to every purpoſe of labour, and of war, of the dairy, and of the butcher's ſtall, from the earlieſt to the lateſt accounts, have made up the riches and equipage of this wandering people.

But in whatever way rude nations ſubſiſt, there are certain points in which, under the firſt impreſſions of property, they nearly agree. Homer either lived with a people in this ſtage of their progreſs, or found himſelf engaged to exhibite their character.

Tacitus

Tacitus had made them the ſubject of a particular treatiſe; and if this be an aſpect under which mankind deſerve to be viewed, it muſt be confeſſed, that we have ſingular advantages in collecting their features. The portrait has already been drawn by the ableſt hands, and gives, at one view, in the writings of theſe celebrated authors, whatever has been ſcattered in the relations of hiſtorians or whatever we have opportunities to obſerve in the actual manners of men, who ſtill remain in a ſimilar ſtate.

In paſſing from the condition we have deſcribed, to this we have at preſent in view, mankind ſtill retain many parts of their earlieſt character. They are ſtill averſe to labour, addicted to war, admirers of fortitude, and, in the language of Tacitus, more laviſh of their blood than of their ſweat*. They are fond of fantaſtic ornaments in their dreſs, and endeavour to fill up the liſtleſs intervals of a life addicted to violence, with hazardous ſports, and with games of chance. Every ſervile occupation they commit to women or ſlaves. But we may apprehend, that the individual having now found a ſeparate intereſt, the bands of ſociety muſt become leſs firm, and domeſtic diſorders more frequent. The members of every community, being diſtinguiſhed among themſelves by unequal poſſeſſions the ground of a permanent and palpable ſubordination is laid.

* Pigrum quin immo et iners videtur, ſudore acquirere quod poſſis ſanguine parare.

THESE particulars accordingly take place among mankind, in passing from the savage to what may be called the barbarous state. Members of the same community enter into quarrels of competition or revenge. They unite in the following leaders, who are distinguished by their fortunes, and by the lustre of their birth. They join the desire of spoil with the love of glory; and from an opinion, that what is acquired by force, justly pertains to the victor, they become hunters of men, and bring every contest to the decision of the sword.

EVERY nation is a band of robbers, who prey without restraint, or remorse, on their neighbours. Cattle, says Achilles, may be seized in every field; and the coasts of the Ægean sea were accordingly pillaged by the heroes of Homer, for no other reason than because those heroes chose to possess themselves of the brass and iron, the cattle, the slaves, and the women, which were found among the nations around them.

A Tartar mounted on his horse, is an animal of prey, who only inquires where cattle are to be found, and how far he must go to possess them. The monk, who had fallen under the displeasure of Mangu Chan, made his peace, by promising, that the Pope, and the Christian princes, should make a surrender of all their herds *.

* Rubruquis.

A similar

A similar spirit reigned, without exception, in all the barbarous nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The antiquities of Greece and Italy, and the fables of every ancient poet, contain examples of its force. It was this spirit that brought our ancestors first into the provinces of the Roman empire; and that afterward, more perhaps than their reverence for the cross, led them to the East, to share with the Tartars in the spoils of the Saracen empire.

From the descriptions contained in the last section, we may incline to believe, that mankind, in their simplest state, are on the eve of erecting republics. Their love of equality, their habit of assembling in public councils, and their zeal for the tribe to which they belong, are qualifications that fit them to act under that species of government; and they seem to have but a few steps to make, in order to reach its establishment. They have only to define the numbers of which their councils shall consist, and to settle the forms of their meeting: They have only to bestow a permanent authority for repressing disorders, and to enact a few rules in favour of that justice they have already acknowledged, and from inclination so strictly observe.

But these steps are far from being so easily made, as they appear on a slight or a transient view. The resolution of chusing, from among their equals, the magistrate to whom they give from thenceforward

a right

a right to controul their own actions, is far from the thoughts of simple men; and no perswasion, perhaps, could make them adopt this measure, or give them any sense of its use.

Even after nations have chosen a military leader they do not intrust him with any species of civil authority. The captain, among the Caribbees, did not pretend to decide in domestic disputes; the terms *jurisdiction* and *government* were unknown in their tongue*.

Before this important change is admitted, men must be accustomed to the distinction of ranks; and before they are sensible that subordination is requisite, they must have arrived at unequal conditions by chance. In desiring property, they only mean to secure their subsistence; but the brave who lead in war, have likewise the largest share in its spoils. The eminent are fond of devising hereditary honours; and the multitude, who admire the parent, are ready to extend their esteem to his offspring.

Possessions descend, and the lustre of family grows brighter with age. Hercules, who perhaps was an eminent warrior, became a god with posterity, and his race was set apart for royalty and sovereign power. When the distinctions of fortune and those of birth are conjoined, the chieftain en-

* History of the Caribbees.

joys

joys a pre-eminence, as well at the feast as in the field. His followers take their place in subordinate stations; and instead of considering themselves as parts of a community, they rank as the followers of a chief, and take their designation from the name of their leader. They find a new object of public affection, in defending his person, and in supporting his station; they lend of their substance to form his estate; they are guided by his smiles and his frowns; and court, as the highest distinction, a share in the feast which their own contributions have furnished.

As the former state of mankind seemed to point at democracy, this seems to exhibit the rudiments of monarchical government. But it is yet far short of that establishment which is known in after ages by the name of *monarchy*. The distinction between the leader and the follower, the prince and the subject, is still but imperfectly marked: Their pursuits and occupations are not different; their minds are not unequally cultivated; they feed from the same dish; they sleep together on the ground; the children of the King, as well as those of the subject, are employed in tending the flock; and the keeper of the swine was a prime counsellor at the court of Ulysses.

The chieftain sufficiently distinguished from his tribe, to excite their admiration, and to flatter their vanity by a supposed affinity to his noble descent, is the object of their veneration, not of their envy: He is

is confidered as the common bond of connection, not as their common mafter; is foremoft in danger, and has a principal fhare in their troubles: His glory is placed in the number of his attendants, in his fuperior magnanimity and valour; that of his followers, in being ready to fhed their blood in his fervice*.

The frequent practice of war tends to ftrengthen the bands of fociety, and the practice of depredation itfelf engages men in trials of mutual attachment and courage. What threatened to ruin and overfet every good difpofition in the human breaft, what feemed to banifh juftice from the focieties of men, tends to unite the fpecies in clans and fraternities; formidable, indeed, and hoftile to one another, but in the domeftic fociety of each, faithful, difinterefted, and generous. Frequent dangers, and the experience of fidelity and valour, awaken the love of thofe virtues, render them a fubject of admiration, and endear their poffeffors.

Actuated by great paffions, the love of glory, and the defire of victory; roufed by the menaces of an enemy, or ftung with revenge; in fufpenfe between the profpects of ruin or conqueft, the barbarian fpends every moment of relaxation in floth. He cannot defcend to the purfuits of induftry or mechanical labour: The beaft of prey is a fluggard; the hunter and the warrior fleeps, while wo-

* Tacitus de moribus Germanorum.

men

men or ſlaves are made to toil for his bread. But ſhew him a quarry at a diſtance, he is bold, impetuous, artful, and rapacious: No bar can withſtand his violence, and no fatigue can allay his activity.

Even under this deſcription, mankind are generous and hoſpitable to ſtrangers, as well as kind, affectionate, and gentle, in their domeſtic ſociety*. Friendſhip and enmity are to them terms of the greateſt importance: They mingle not their functions together; they have ſingled out their enemy, and they have choſen their friend. Even in depredation, the principal object is glory; and ſpoil is conſidered as a badge of victory. Nations and tribes are their prey: The ſolitary traveller, by whom they can acquire only the reputation of generoſity, is ſuffered to paſs unhurt, or is treated with ſplendid munificence.

Though diſtinguiſhed into ſmall cantons under their ſeveral chieftains, and for the moſt part ſeparated by jealouſy and animoſity; yet when preſſed by wars and formidable enemies, they ſometimes unite in greater bodies. Like the Greeks in their expedition to Troy, they follow ſome remarkable leader, and compoſe a kingdom of many ſeparate tribes. But ſuch coalitions are merely occaſional; and even during their continuance, more reſemble

* Jean du Plan Carpen. Rubruquis, Cæſar, Tacit.

republic than monarchy. The inferior chieftains reſerve their importance, and intrude, with an air of equality, into the councils of their leader, as the people of their ſeveral clans commonly intrude upon them*. Upon what motive indeed could we ſuppoſe, that men who live together in the greateſt familiarity, and amongſt whom the diſtinctions of rank are ſo obſcurely marked, would reſign their perſonal ſentiments and inclinations, or pay an implicit ſubmiſſion to a leader who can neither overawe nor corrupt?

Military force muſt be employed to extort, or the hire of the venal to buy, that engagement which the Tartar comes under to his prince, when he promiſes, "That he will go where he ſhall be commanded; that he will come when he ſhall be called; that he will kill whoever is pointed out to him; and, for the future, that he will conſider the voice of the King as a ſword†."

These are the terms to which even the ſtubborn heart of the barbarian has been reduced, in conſequence of a deſpotiſm he himſelf had eſtabliſhed; and men have, in that low ſtate of the commercial arts, in Europe, as well as in Aſia, taſted of political ſlavery. When intereſt prevails in every breaſt, the ſovereign and his party cannot eſcape the infection: He employs the force with which he is intruſted,

* Kolbe: Deſcription of the Cape of Good Hope.

† Simon de St Quintin.

truſted, to turn his people into a property, and to command their poſſeſſions for his profit or his pleaſure. If riches are by any people made the ſtandard of good and of evil, let them beware of the powers they intruſt to their prince. "With the "Suiones," ſays Tacitus, "riches are in high e-"ſteem; and this people are accordingly diſarmed, "and reduced to ſlavery*."

It is in this woful condition that mankind, being ſlaviſh, intereſted, inſidious, deceitful, and bloody, bear marks, if not of the leaſt curable, ſurely of the moſt lamentable ſort of corruption†. Among them, war is the mere practice of rapine, to enrich the individual; commerce is turned into a ſyſtem of ſnares and impoſitions; and government by turns oppreſſive or weak.

It were happy for the human race, when guided by intereſt, and not governed by laws, that being ſplit into nations of a moderate extent, they found in every canton ſome natural bar to its further enlargement, and met with occupation enough in maintaining their independence, without being able to extend their dominion.

There is not diſparity of rank, among men in rude ages, ſufficient to give their communities the form of legal monarchy; and in a territory of con-

* De moribus Germanorum.

† Chardin's Travels.

ſiderable

ſiderable extent, when united under one head, the warlike and turbulent ſpirit of its inhabitants ſeems to require the bridle of deſpotiſm and military force. Where any degree of freedom remains, the powers of the prince are, as they were in moſt of the rude monarchies of Europe, extremely precarious, and depend chiefly on his perſonal character: Where, on the contrary, the powers of the prince are above the controul of his people, they are likeways above the reſtrictions of juſtice. Rapacity and terror become the predominant motives of conduct, and form the character of the only parties into which mankind are divided, that of the oppreſſor, and that of the oppreſſed.

This calamity threatened Europe for ages, under the conqueſt and ſettlement of its new inhabitants*. It has actually taken place in Aſia, where ſimilar conqueſts have been made; and even without the ordinary opiates of effeminacy, or a ſervile weakneſs, founded on luxury, it has ſurprized the Tartar on his wain, in the rear of his herds. Among this people, in the heart of a great continent, bold and enterprizing warriors aroſe: They ſubdued by ſurprize, or ſuperior abilities, the contiguous hords; they gained, in their progreſs, acceſſions of numbers and of ſtrength; and, like a torrent increaſing as it deſcends, became too ſtrong for any bar that

* See Hume's Hiſtory of the Tudors.—There ſeemed to be nothing wanting to eſtabliſh a perfect deſpotiſm in that houſe, but a few regiments of troops under the command of the Crown.

could

could be opposed to their passage. The conquering tribe, during a succession of ages, furnished the prince with his guards; and while they themselves were allowed to share in its spoils, were the voluntary tools of oppression. In this manner has despotism and corruption made their way into regions, so much renowned for the wild freedom of nature: A power which was the terror of every effeminate province is disarmed, and the nursery of nations is itself gone to decay*.

Where rude nations escape this calamity, they require the exercise of foreign wars to maintain domestic peace; when no enemy appears from abroad, they have leisure for private feuds, and employ that courage in their dissensions at home, which, in time of war, is employed in defence of their country.

"Among the Gauls," says Cæsar, "there are "subdivisions, not only in every nation, and in "every district and village, but almost in every "house, every one must fly to some patron for pro-"tection†." In this distribution of parties, not only the feuds of clans, but the quarrels of families, even the differences and competitions of individuals, are decided by force. The sovereign, when unassisted by superstition, endeavours in vain to employ his jurisdiction, or to procure a submission to the decisions of law. By a people who are accustomed to

* See the History of the Huns.

† De Bello Gallico, lib. 6.

owe

owe their poſſeſſions to violence, and who deſpiſe fortune itſelf without the reputation of courage, no umpire is admitted but the ſword. Scipio offered his arbitration to terminate the competition of two Spaniards in a diſputed ſucceſſion: "That," ſaid they, "we have already refuſed to our relations: We do not ſubmit our difference to the judgment of men; and even among the gods, we appeal to Mars alone*.

It is well known that the nations of Europe carried this mode of proceeding to a degree of formality unheard of in other parts of the world: The civil and criminal judge could, in moſt caſes, do no more than appoint the liſts, and leave the parties to decide their cauſe by the combat: they apprehended that the victor had a verdict of the gods in his favour: and when they dropped in any inſtance this extraordinary form of proceſs, they ſubſtituted in its place ſome other more capricious appeal to chance; in which they likewiſe thought that the judgment of the gods was declared.

The fierce nations of Europe were even fond of the combat as an exerciſe and a ſport. In the abſence of real quarrels, companions challenged each other to a trial of ſkill, in which one of them frequently periſhed. When Scipio celebrated the funeral of his father and his uncle, the Spaniards came

* Livy.

in

in pairs to fight, and, by a public exhibition of their duels, to increaſe the ſolemnity*.

In this wild and lawleſs ſtate, where the effects of true religion would have been ſo deſireable, and ſo ſalutary, ſuperſtition frequently diſputes the aſcendant even with the admiration of valour; and an order of men, like the Druids among the ancient Gauls and Britons †, or ſome pretender to divination, as at the Cape of Good Hope, finds, in the credit which is paid to his ſorcery, a way to the poſſeſſion of power: His magic wand comes in competition with the ſword itſelf; and, in the manner of the Druids, gives the firſt rudiments of civil government to ſome, or, like the ſuppoſed deſcendent of the ſun among the Natchez, and the Lama among the Tartars, to others, an early taſte of deſpotiſm and abſolute ſlavery.

We are generally at a loſs to conceive how mankind can ſubſiſt under cuſtoms and manners extremely different from our own; and we are apt to exaggerate the miſery of barbarous times, by an imagination of what we ourſelves ſhould ſuffer in a ſituation to which we are not accuſtomed. But every age hath its conſolations, as well as its ſufferings ‡. In the interval of occaſional outrages, the friendly

* Livy, Lib. 3. † Cæſar.

‡ Priſcus, when employed on an embaſſy to Attila, was accoſted in Greek, by a perſon who wore the dreſs of a Scythian. Having

friendly intercourſes of men, even in their rudeſt condition, is affectionate and happy*. In rude ages, the perſons and properties of individuals are ſecure; becauſe each has a friend, as well as an enemy; and if the one is diſpoſed to moleſt, the other is ready to protect; and the very admiration of valour, which in ſome inſtances tends to ſanctify violence, inſpires likeways certain maxims of generoſity and honour, that tend to prevent the commiſſion of wrongs.

Men bear with the defects of their policy, as they do with hardſhips and inconveniencies in their manner of living. The alarms and the fatigues of

Having expreſſed ſurprize, and being deſirous to know the cauſe of his ſtay in ſo wild a company, was told, that this Greek had been a captive, and for ſome time a ſlave, till he obtained his liberty in reward of ſome remarkable action. "I live more hap-"pily here," ſays he, "than ever I did under the Roman go-"vernment: For they who live with the Scythians, if they can "endure the fatigues of war, have nothing elſe to moleſt them; "they enjoy their poſſeſſions undiſturbed: Whereas you are con-"tinually a prey to foreign enemies, or to bad government; "you are forbid to carry arms in your own defence; you ſuffer "from the remiſſneſs and ill conduct of thoſe who are appointed "to protect you; the evils of peace are even worſe than thoſe "of war; no puniſhment is ever inflicted on the powerful or "the rich; no mercy is ſhown to the poor; although your in-"ſtitutions were wiſely deviſed, yet in the management of cor-"rupted men, their effects are pernicious and cruel." *Excerpta de legationibus.*

* D'Arvieux's Hiſtory of the Wild Arabs.

war

war become a necessary recreation to those who are accustomed to them, and who have the tone of their passions raised above less animating or trying occasions. Old men, among the courtiers of Attila, wept, when they heard of heroic deeds, which they themselves could no longer perform*. And among the Celtic nations, when age rendered the warrior unfit for his former toils, it was the custom, in order to abridge the languors of a listless and inactive life, to sue for death at the hands of his friends†.

WITH all this ferocity of spirit, the rude nations of the West were subdued by the policy and more regular warfare of the Romans. The point of honour, which the barbarians of Europe adopted as individuals, exposed them to a peculiar disadvantage, by rendering them, even in their national wars, averse to assailing their enemy by surprise, or taking the benefit of stratagem; and though separately bold and intrepid, yet, like other rude nations, they were, when assembled in great bodies, addicted to superstition, and subject to panics.

THEY were, from a consciousness of their personal courage and force, sanguine on the eve of

* D'Arvieux's History of the Wild Arabs.

† Ubi transcendit florentes viribus annos,
Impatiens ævi spernit novisse senectam.

Silius, lib. 1. 225.

battle; they were, beyond the bounds of moderation, elated on ſucceſs, and dejected in adverſity; and being diſpoſed to conſider every event as a judgment of the gods, they were never qualified by an uniform application of prudence to make the moſt of their forces, to repair their miſfortunes, or to improve their advantages.

Resigned to the government of affection and paſſion, they were generous and faithful where they had fixed an attachment; implacable, froward, and cruel, where they had conceived a diſlike: addicted to debauchery, and the immoderate uſe of intoxicating liquors, they deliberated on the affairs of ſtate in the heat of their riot; and in the ſame dangerous moments, conceived the deſigns of military enterpriſe, or terminated their domeſtic diſſenſions by the dagger or the ſword.

In their wars they preferred death to captivity. The victorious armies of the Romans, in entering a town by aſſault, or in forcing an incampment, have found the mother in the act of deſtroying her children, that they might not be taken; and the dagger of the parent, red with the blood of his family, ready to be plunged at laſt into his own breaſt*.

* Liv. lib. xli. 11. Dio. Caſſ.

In all these particulars we perceive that vigour of spirit, which renders disorder itself respectable, and which qualifies men, if fortunate in their situation, to lay the basis of domestic liberty, as well as to maintain against foreign enemies their national independence and freedom.

PART THIRD.

OF THE HISTORY OF POLICY AND ARTS.

SECTION I.

Of the Influences of Climate and Situation.

WHAT we have hitherto obſerved on the condition and manners of nations, though chiefly derived from what has paſſed in the temperate climates, may, in ſome meaſure, be applied to the rude ſtate of mankind in every part of the earth: But if we intend to purſue the hiſtory of our ſpecies in its further attainments, we may ſoon enter on ſubjects which will confine our obſervation to narrower limits. The genius of political wiſdom, and of civil arts, appears to have choſen his ſeats in particular tracts of the earth, and to have ſelected his favourites in particular races of men.

MAN,

MAN, in his animal capacity, is qualified to ſubſiſt in every climate. He reigns with the lion and the tyger under the equatorial heats of the ſun, or he aſſociates with the bear and the rain-deer beyond the polar circle. His verſatile diſpoſition fits him to aſſume the habits of either condition, or his talent for arts enables him to ſupply its defects. The intermediate climates, however, appear moſt to favour his nature; and in whatever manner we account for the fact, it cannot be doubted, that this animal has always attained to the principal honours of his ſpecies within the temperate zone. The arts, which he has on this ſcene repeatedly invented, the extent of his reaſon, the fertility of his fancy, and the force of his genius in literature, commerce, policy, and war, ſufficiently declare either a diſtinguiſhed advantage of ſituation, or a natural ſuperiority of mind.

THE moſt remarkable races of men, it is true, have been rude before they were poliſhed. They have in ſome caſes returned to rudeneſs again: And it is not from the actual poſſeſſion of arts, ſcience, or policy, that we are to pronounce of their genius.

THERE is a vigour, a reach of capacity, and a ſenſibility of mind, which may characterize as well the ſavage as the citizen, the ſlave as well as the maſter; and the ſame powers of the mind may be turned to a variety of purpoſes. A modern Greek, perhaps, is miſchievous, ſlaviſh, and

and cunning, from the ſame animated temperament that made his anceſtor ardent, ingenious, and bold, in the camp, or in the council of his nation. A modern Italian is diſtinguiſhed by ſenſibility, quickneſs, and art, while he employs on trifles the capacity of an ancient Roman; and exhibits now, in the ſcene of amuſement, and in the ſearch of a frivolous applauſe, that fire, and thoſe paſſions, with which Gracchus burned in the forum, and ſhook the aſſemblies of a ſeverer people.

The commercial and lucrative arts have been, in ſome climates, the principal object of mankind, and have been retained through every diſaſter; in others, even under all the fluctuations of fortune, they have ſtill been neglected; while in the temperate climates of Europe and Aſia, they have had their ages of admiration as well as contempt.

In one ſtate of ſociety, arts are ſlighted, from that very ardour of mind, and principle of activity, by which, in another, they are practiſed with the greateſt ſucceſs. While men are ingroſſed by their paſſions, heated and rouſed by the ſtruggles and dangers of their country; while the trumpet ſounds, or the alarm of ſocial engagement is rung, and the heart beats high, it were a mark of dulneſs, or of an abject ſpirit, to find leiſure for the ſtudy of eaſe, or the purſuit of improvements, which have mere convenience or eaſe for their object.

The frequent viciſſitudes and reverſes of fortune, which nations have experienced on that very ground where the arts have proſpered, are probably the effects of a buſy, inventive, and verſatile ſpirit, by which men have carried every national change to extremes. They have raiſed the fabric of deſpotic empire to its greateſt height, where they had beſt underſtood the foundations of freedom. They periſhed in the flames which they themſelves had kindled; and they only, perhaps, were capable of diſplaying, by turns, the greateſt improvements, or the loweſt corruptions, to which the human mind can be brought.

On this ſcene, mankind have twice, within the compaſs of hiſtory, aſcended from rude beginnings to very high degrees of refinement. In every age, whether deſtined by its temporary diſpoſition to build or to deſtroy, they have left the veſtiges of an active and vehement ſpirit. The pavement and the ruins of Rome are buried in duſt, ſhaken from the feet of barbarians, who trod with contempt on the refinements of luxury, and ſpurned thoſe arts, the uſe of which it was reſerved for the poſterity of the ſame people to diſcover and to admire. The tents of the wild Arab are even now pitched among the ruins of magnificent cities; and the waſte fields which border on Paleſtine and Syria, are perhaps become again the nurſery of infant nations. The chieftain of an Arab tribe, like the founder of Rome may have already fixed the roots of a plant that is

to

to flouriſh in ſome future period, or laid the foundations of a fabric, that will attain to its grandeur in ſome diſtant age.

Great part of Africa has been always unknown; but the ſilence of fame, on the ſubject of its revolutions, is an argument, where no other proof can be found, of weakneſs in the genius of its people. The torrid zone, every where round the globe, however known to the geographer, has furniſhed few materials for hiſtory; and though in many places ſupplied with the arts of life in no contemptible degree, has no where matured the more important projects of political wiſdom, nor inſpired the virtues which are connected with freedom, and which are required in the conduct of civil affairs.

It was indeed in the torrid zone that mere arts of mechaniſm and manufacture were found, among the inhabitants of the new world, to have made the greateſt advance: It is in India, and in the regions of this hemiſphere, which are viſited by the vertical ſun, that the arts of manufacture, and the practice of commerce, are of the greateſt antiquity, and have ſurvived, with the ſmalleſt diminution the ruins of time, and the revolutions of empire.

The ſun, it ſeems, which ripens the pine-apple and the tamarind, inſpires a degree of mildneſs that can even aſſuage the rigours of deſpotical government: and ſuch is the effect of a gentle and pacific

diſpoſition in the natives of the Eaſt, that no conqueſt, no irruption of barbarians, terminates, as they did among the ſtubborn natives of Europe, by a total deſtruction of what the love of eaſe and of pleaſure had produced.

TRANSFERRED, without any great ſtruggle, from one maſter to another, the natives of India are ready, upon every change, to purſue their induſtry, to acquieſce in the enjoyment of life, and the hopes of animal pleaſure: the wars of conqueſt are not prolonged to exaſperate the parties engaged in them, or to deſolate the land for which thoſe parties contend: even the barbarous invader leaves untouched the commercial ſettlement which has not provoked his rage: though maſter of opulent cities, he only incamps, in their neighbourhood and leaves to his heirs the option of entering, by degrees, on the pleaſures, the vices, and the pageantries which his acquiſitions afford: his ſucceſſors, ſtill more than himſelf, are diſpoſed to foſter the hive, in proportion as they taſte more of its ſweets; and they ſpare the inhabitant, together with his dwelling, as they ſpare the herd or the ſtall, of which they are become the proprietors.

THE modern deſcription of India is a repetition of the ancient, and the preſent ſtate of China is derived from a diſtant antiquity, to which there is no parallel in the hiſtory of mankind. The ſucceſ-

ſion

ſion of monarchs has been changed; but no revolutions have affected the ſtate. The African and the Samoiede are not more uniform in their ignorance and barbarity, than the Chineſe and the Indian, if we may credit their own ſtory, have been in the practice of manufacture, and in the obſervance of a certain police, which was calculated only to regulate their traffic, and to protect them in their application to ſervile or lucrative arts.

If we paſs from theſe general repreſentations of what mankind have done, to the more minute deſcription of the animal himſelf, as he has occupied different climates, and is diverſified in his temper, complexion, and character, we ſhall find a variety of genius correſponding to the effects of his conduct, and the reſult of his ſtory.

MAN, in the perfection of his natural faculties is quick and delicate in his ſenſibility; extenſive and various in his imaginations and reflections; attentive, penetrating, and ſubtile, in what relates to his fellow-creatures; firm and ardent in his purpoſes; devoted to friendſhip or to enmity; jealous of his independence and his honour, which he will not relinquiſh for ſafety or for profit: under all his corruptions or improvements, he retains his natural ſenſibility, if not his force; and his commerce is a bleſſing or a curſe, according to the direction his mind has received.

BUT

But under the extremes of heat or of cold, the active range of the human ſoul appears to be limited; and men are of inferior importance, either as friends, or as enemies. In the one extreme, they are dull and ſlow, moderate in their deſires, regular and pacific in their manner of life; in the other, they are feveriſh in their paſſions, weak in their judgments, and addicted by temperament to animal pleaſure. In both the heart is mercenary, and makes important conceſſions for childiſh bribes: in both the ſpirit is prepared for ſervitude: In the one it is ſubdued by fear of the future; in the other it is not rouſed even by its ſenſe of the preſent.

The nations of Europe who would ſettle or conquer on the ſouth or the north of their own happier climates, find little reſiſtance: they extend their dominion at pleaſure, and find no where a limit but in the ocean, and in the ſatiety of conqueſt. With few of the pangs and the ſtruggles that precede the reduction of nations, mighty provinces, have been ſucceſſively annexed to the territory of Ruſſia; and its ſovereign, who accounts within his domain, entire tribes, with whom perhaps none of his emiſſaries have ever converſed, diſpatched a few geometers to extend his empire, and thus to execute a project, in which the Romans were obliged to employ their conſuls and their legions*. Theſe modern conquerors complain of rebellion, where they

* See Ruſſian Atlas.

meet

meet with repugnance; and are surprised at being treated as enemies, where they come to impose their tribute.

It appears, however, that on the shores of the Eastern sea, they have met with nations † who have questioned their title to reign, and who have considered the requisition of a tax as the demand of effects for nothing. Here perhaps may be found the genius of ancient Europe, and under its name of ferocity, the spirit of national independence ‡; that spirit which disputed its ground in the West with the victorious armies of Rome, and baffled the attempts of the Persian monarchs to comprehend the villages of Greece within the bounds of their extensive dominion.

The great and striking diversities which obtain betwixt the inhabitants of climates far removed from each other, are, like the varieties of other animals in different regions, easily observed. The horse and the rain-deer are just emblems of the Arab and the Laplander: the native of Arabia, like the animal for whose race his country is famed, whether wild in the woods, or tutored by art, is lively, active, and fervent in the exercise on which he is bent. This race of men, in their rude state, fly to the desert for freedom, and in roving bands

† The Tchutzi.

‡ Note to the Genealogical History of the Tartars, vouched by Strahlenberg.

alarm

alarm the frontiers of empire, and ſtrike a terror in the province to which their moving encampments advance*. When rouſed by the proſpect of conqueſt or diſpoſed to act on a plan, they ſpread their dominion, and their ſyſtem of imagination, over mighty tracts of the earth: when poſſeſſed of property and of ſettlement, they ſet the example of a lively invention, and ſuperior ingenuity, in the practice of arts, and the ſtudy of ſcience. The Laplander, on the contrary, like the aſſociate of his climate, is hardy, indefatigable, and patient of famine; dull rather than tame; ſerviceable in a particular tract; and incapable of change. Whole nations continue from age to age in the ſame condition, and, with immoveable phlegm, ſubmit to the appellations of *Dane*, of *Swede*, or of *Muſcovite*, according to the land they inhabit; and ſuffer their country to be ſevered like a common, by the line on which thoſe nations have traced their limits of empire.

It is not in the extremes alone that theſe varieties of genius may be clearly diſtinguiſhed. Their continual change keeps pace with the variations of climate with which we ſuppoſe them connected: and though certain degrees of capacity, penetration and ardour, are not the lot of entire nations, nor the vulgar properties of any people; yet their unequal frequency, and unequal meaſure, in different coun-

* D'Arvieux.

tries,

tries, are sufficiently manifest from the manners, the tone of conversation, the talent for business, amusement, and the literary composition, which predominate in each.

It is to the Southern nations of Europe, both ancient and modern, that we owe the invention and embellishment of that mythology, and those early traditions, which continue to furnish the materials of fancy, and the field of poetic allusion. To them we owe the romantic tales of chivalry, as well as the subsequent models of a more rational style, by which the heart and the imagination are kindled, and the understanding informed.

The fruits of industry have abounded most in the North, and the study of science has here received its most solid improvements: The efforts of imagination and sentiment were most frequent and most successful in the south. While the shores of the Baltic became famed for the studies of Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler, those of the Mediterranean were celebrated for giving birth to men of genius in all its variety, and for having abounded with poets and historians, as well as with men of science.

On one side, learning took its rise from the heart and the fancy; on the other, it is still confined to the judgment and the memory. A faithful detail of public transactions, with little discernment of

their

their comparative importance; the treaties and the claims of nations, the births and genealogies of princes, are in the literature of Northern nations, amply preſerved; while the lights of the underſtanding, and the feelings of the heart are ſuffered to periſh. The hiſtory of the human character; the intereſting memoir, founded no leſs on the careleſs proceedings of a private life, than on the formal tranſactions of a public ſtation; the ingenious pleaſantry, the piercing ridicule, the tender, pathetic, or the elevated ſtrain of elocution, have been confined in modern, as well as ancient times, with a few exceptions, to the ſame latitudes with the fig and the vine.

These diverſities of natural genius, if real, muſt have great part of their foundation in the animal frame: And it has been often obſerved, that the vine flouriſhes, where, to quicken the ferments of the human blood, its aids are the leaſt required. While ſpirituous liquors are, among Southern nations, from a ſenſe of their ruinous effects, prohibited; or from a love of decency, and the poſſeſſion of a temperament ſufficiently warm, not greatly deſired; they carry in the North a peculiar charm, while they awaken the mind, and give a taſte of that lively fancy and ardour of paſſion, which the climate is found to deny.

The melting deſires, or the fiery paſſions, which in one climate take place between the ſexes, are in another

another changed into a sober consideration, or a patience of mutual disgust. This change is remarked in crossing the Mediterranean, in following the course of the Missisippi, in ascending the mountains of Caucasus, and in passing from the Alps and the Pyrenees to the shores of the Baltic.

The female sex domineers on the frontier of Louisiana, by the double engine of superstition, and of passion. They are slaves among the native inhabitants of Canada, and are chiefly valued for the toils they endure, and the domestic service they yield*.

The burning ardours, and the torturing jealousies of the seraglio, and the haram, which have reigned so long in Asia and Africa, and which, in the southern parts of Europe, have scarcely given way to the difference of religion and civil establishments, are found, however, with an abatement of heat in the climate, to be more easily changed, in one latitude, into a temporary passion which ingrosses the mind, without enfeebling it, and excites to romantic atchievements: By a farther progress to the north, it is changed into a spirit of gallantry, which employs the wit and the fancy more than the heart; which prefers intrigue to enjoyment; and substitutes affectation and vanity, where sentiment and desire have failed. As it departs from the sun, the same passion is farther composed into

* Charlevoix.

a habit of domeſtic connection, or frozen into a ſtate of inſenſibility, under which the ſexes at freedom ſcarcely chuſe to unite their ſociety.

THESE variations of temperament and character, do not indeed correſpond with the number of degrees that are meaſured from the equator to the pole; nor does the temperature of the air itſelf depend on the latitude. Varieties of ſoil and poſition, the diſtance or neighbourhood of the ſea, are known to affect the atmoſphere, and may have ſignal effects in compoſing the animal frame.

THE climates of America, though taken under the ſame parallel, are obſerved to differ from thoſe of Europe. There, extenſive marſhes, great lakes, aged, decayed, and crouded foreſts, with the other circumſtances that mark an uncultivated country, are ſuppoſed to repleniſh the air with heavy and noxious vapours, that give a double aſperity to the winter, and, during many months, by the frequency and continuance of fogs, ſnow, and froſt, carry the inconveniencies of the frigid zone far into the temperate. The Samoiede and the Laplander, however, have their counterpart, though on a lower latitude, on the ſhores of America: The Canadian and the Iroquois bear a reſemblance to the ancient inhabitants of the middling climates of Europe: The Mexican, like the Aſiatic of India, being addicted to pleaſure, was ſunk in effeminacy; and in the neighbourhood of the wild and the free, had

had suffered to be raised on his weakness, a domineering superstition; and a permanent fabric of despotical government.

GREAT part of Tartary lyes under the same parallels with Greece, Italy, and Spain; but the climates are found to be different; and while the shores, not only of the Mediterranean, but even those of the Atlantic, are favoured with a moderate change and vicissitude of seasons, the eastern parts of Europe, and the northern continent of Asia, are afflicted with all their extremes. In one season, we are told, that the plagues of an ardent summer reach almost to the frozen sea; and that the inhabitant is obliged to screen himself from noxious vermin in the same clouds of smoke in which he must, at a different time of the year, take shelter from the rigours of cold. When winter returns, the transition is rapid, and with an asperity almost equal in every latitude, lays waste the face of the earth, from the northern confines of Siberia, to the descents of Mount Caucasus and the frontier of India.

WITH this unequal distribution of climate, by which the lot, as well as the national character, of the northern Asiatic may be deemed inferior to that of Europeans, who lye under the same parallels, a similar gradation of temperament and spirit, however, has been observed, in following the meridian on either tract; and the Southern Tartar has over the Tonguses and the Samoiede, the same pre-eminence

nence that certain nations of Europe are known to poffefs over their northern neighbours, in fituations more advantageous to both.

The fouthern hemifphere fcarcely offers a fubject of like obfervation. The temperate zone is there ftill undifcovered, or is only known in two promontories, the Cape of Good Hope, and Cape Horn, which ftretch into moderate latitudes on that fide of the line. But the favage of South America, notwithftanding the interpofition of the nations of Peru and of Mexico, is found to refemble his counterpart on the North; and the Hottentot, in many things, the barbarian of Europe: He is tenacious of freedom, has rudiments of policy, and a national vigour, which ferve to diftinguifh his race from the other African tribes, who are expofed to the more vertical rays of the fun.

While we have, in thefe obfervations, only thrown out what muft prefent itfelf on the moft curfory view of the hiftory of mankind, or what may be prefumed from the mere obfcurity of fome nations, who inhabit great tracts of the earth, as well as from the luftre of others, we are ftill unable to explain the manner in which climate may affect the temperament, or fofter the genius of its inhabitant.

That the temper of the heart, and the intellectual operations of the mind, are, in fome meafure,

sure, dependent on the state of the animal organs, is well known from experience. Men differ from themselves in sickness and in health; under a change of diet, of air, and of exercise: but we are, even in these familiar instances, at a loss how to connect the cause with its supposed effect: and though climate, by including a variety of such causes, may, by some regular influence, affect the characters of men, we can never hope to explain the manner of those influences till we have understood what probably we shall never understand, the structure of those finer organs with which operations of the soul are connected.

When we point out, in the situation of a people, circumstances which, by determining their pursuits, regulate their habits, and their manner of life; and when, instead of referring to the supposed physical source of their dispositions, we assign their inducements to a determinate conduct; in this we speak of effects and of causes whose connection is more familiarly known. We can understand, for instance, why a race of men like the Samoiede, confined, during great part of the year, to darkness, or retired into caverns, should differ, in their manners and apprehensions, from those who are at liberty in every season; or who, instead of seeking relief from the extremities of cold, are employed in search of precautions against the oppressions of a burning sun. Fire and exercise are the remedies of cold; repose and shade the securities from heat. The Hollander

Hollander is laborious and induſtrious in Europe; he becomes more languid and ſlothful in India *.

GREAT extremities, either of heat or cold, are, perhaps, in a moral view, equally unfavourable to the active genius of mankind, and by preſenting alike inſuperable difficulties to be overcome, or ſtrong inducements to indolence and ſloth, equally prevent the firſt applications of ingenuity, or limit their progreſs. Some intermediate degrees of inconvenience in the ſituation, at once excite the ſpirit, and, with the hopes of ſucceſs, encourage its efforts. "It is in the leaſt favourable ſituations," ſays Mr Rouſſeau, "that the arts have flouriſhed the moſt. I could ſhow them in Egypt, as they ſpread with the overflowing of the Nile; and in Attica as they mounted up to the clouds, from a rocky ſoil and from barren ſands; while on the fertile banks of the Eurotas, they were not able to faſten their roots."

WHERE mankind from the firſt ſubſiſt by toil, and in the midſt of difficulties, the defects of their ſituation are ſupplied by induſtry: and while dry, tempting, and healthful lands are left uncultivated †, the

* The Dutch ſailors who were employed in the ſiege of Malaco, tore or burnt the ſail-cloth which was given them to make tents, that they might not have the trouble of making or pitching them. *Voy. de Mateliеf.*

† Compare the ſtate of Hungary with that of Holland.

the pestilent marsh is drained with great labour, and the sea is fenced off with mighty barriers, the materials and the costs of which, the soil to be gained can scarcely afford, or repay. Harbours are opened, and crouded with shipping, where vessels of burden, if they are not constructed with a view to the situation, have not water to float. Elegant and magnificent edifices are raised on foundations of slime; and all the conveniencies of human life are made to abound, where nature does not seem to have prepared a reception for men. It is in vain to expect, that the residence of arts and commerce should be determined by the possession of natural advantages. Men do more when they have certain difficulties to surmount, than when they have supposed blessings to enjoy: and the shade of the barren oak and the pine are more favourable to the genius of mankind, than that of the palm or the tamarind.

Among the advantages which enable nations to run the career of policy, as well as of arts, it may be expected, from the observations already made, that we should reckon every circumstance which enables them to divide and to maintain themselves in distinct and independent communities. The society and concourse of other men, are not more necessary to form the individual, than the rivalship and competition of nations are to invigorate the principles of political life in a state. Their wars,

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and their treaties, their mutual jealousies, and the establishments which they devise with a view to each other, constitute more than half the occupations of mankind, and furnish materials for their greatest and most improving exertions. For this reason, clusters of islands, a continent divided by many natural barriers, great rivers, ridges of mountains, and arms of the sea, are best fitted for becoming the nursery of independent and respectable nations. The distinction of states being clearly maintained, a principle of political life is established in every division, and the capital of every district, like the heart in an animal body, communicates with ease the vital blood and the national spirit to its members.

The most respectable nations have always been found where at least one part of the frontier has been washed by the sea. This barrier, perhaps the strongest of all in the times of ignorance, does not, however, even then supersede the cares of a national defence; and in the advanced state of arts, gives the greatest scope and facility to commerce.

Thriving and independent nations were accordingly scattered on the shores of the Pacific and the Atlantic. They surrounded the Red sea, the Mediterranean, and the Baltic; while, a few tribes excepted, who retire among the mountains bordering on India and Persia, or who have found some rude establishment among the creeks and the shores of the Caspian and the Euxine, there is scarcely a people

ple in the vaſt continent of Aſia who deſerves the name of a nation. The unbounded plain is traverſed at large by hordes, who are in perpetual motion, or who are diſplaced and harraſſed by their mutual hoſtilities. Although they are never perhaps actually blended together in the courſe of hunting, or in the ſearch of paſture, they cannot bear one great diſtinction of nations, which is taken from the territory, and which is deeply impreſſed by an affection to the native ſeat. They move in troops, without the arrangement or the concert of nations; they become eaſy acceſſions to every new empire among themſelves, or to the Chineſe and the Muſcovite, with whom they hold a traffic for the means of ſubſiſtence, and the materials of pleaſure.

Where a happy ſyſtem of nations is formed, they do not rely for the continuance of their ſeparate names, and for that of their political independence, on the barriers erected by nature. Mutual jealouſies lead to the maintenance of a balance of power; and this principle, more than the Rhine and the Ocean, than the Alps and the Pyrenees in modern Europe; more than the ſtraits of Thermopylæ, the mountains of Thrace, or the bays of Salamine and Corinth in ancient Greece; tended to prolong the ſeparation, to which the inhabitants of theſe happy climates have owed their felicity as nations, the luſtre of their fame, and their civil accompliſhments.

If we mean to purſue the hiſtory of civil ſociety, our attention muſt be chiefly directed to ſuch examples, and we muſt here bid farewel to thoſe regions of the earth, on which our ſpecies, by the effects of ſituation or climate, appear to be reſtrained in their national purſuits, or inferior in the powers of the mind.

SECT.

SECT. II.

The History of political Establishments.

WE have hitherto obferved mankind, either united together on terms of equality, or difpofed to admit of a fubordination founded merely on the voluntary refpect and attachment which they paid to their leaders; but, in both cafes, without any concerted plan of government, or fyftem of laws.

THE favage, whofe fortune is comprifed in his cabin, his fur, and his arms, is fatisfied with that provifion, and with that degree of fecurity, he himfelf can procure. He perceives, in treating with his equal, no fubject of difcuffion that fhould be referred to the decifion of a judge; nor does he find in any hand the badges of magiftracy, or the enfigns of a perpetual command.

THE barbarian, though induced by his admiration of perfonal qualities, the luftre of a heroic race, or a fuperiority of fortune, to follow the banners of a leader, and to act a fubordinate part in his tribe, knows not, that what he performs from choice, is to be made a fubject of obligation. He acts from affections unacquainted with forms; and when provoked, or when engaged in difputes, he

recurs

recurs to the ſword, as the ultimate means of deciſion, in all queſtions of right.

HUMAN affairs, in the mean time, continue their progreſs. What was in one generation a propenſity to herd with the ſpecies, becomes, in the ages which follow, a principle of national union. What was originally an alliance for common defence, becomes a concerted plan of political force; the care of ſubſiſtence becomes an anxiety for accumulating wealth, and the foundation of commercial arts.

MANKIND, in following the preſent ſenſe of their minds, in ſtriving to remove inconveniencies, or to gain apparent and contiguous advantages, arrive at ends which even their imagination could not anticipate, and paſs on, like other animals, in the track of their nature, without perceiving its end. He who firſt ſaid, "I will appropriate this "field; I will leave it to my heirs;" did not perceive, that he was laying the foundation of civil laws and political eſtabliſhments. He who firſt ranged himſelf under a leader, did not perceive, that he was ſetting the example of a permanent ſubordination, under the pretence of which, the rapacious were to ſeize his poſſeſſions, and the arrogant to lay claim to his ſervice.

MEN, in general, are ſufficiently diſpoſed to occupy themſelves in forming projects and ſchemes: But he who would ſcheme and project for others,

will find an opponent in every person who is disposed to scheme for himself. Like the winds, that come we know not whence, and blow whithersoever they list, the forms of society are derived from an obscure and distant origin; they arise, long before the date of philosophy, from the instincts, not from the speculations, of men. The croud of mankind, are directed in their establishments and measures, by the circumstances in which they are placed; and seldom are turned from their way, to follow the plan of any single projector.

Every step and every movement of the multitude, even in what are termed enlightened ages, are made with equal blindness to the future; and nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design*. If Cromwell said, That a man never mounts higher, than when he knows not whither he is going; it may with more reason be affirmed of communities, that they admit of the greatest revolutions where no change is intended, and that the most refined politicians do not always know whither they are leading the state by their projects.

If we listen to the testimony of modern history, and to that of the most authentic parts of the ancient; if we attend to the practice of nations in every quarter of the world, and in every condition,

* De Retz Memoirs.

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whether that of the barbarian or the polished, we shall find very little reason to retract this assertion. No constitution is formed by concert, no government is copied from a plan. The members of a small state contend for equality; the members of a greater, find themselves classed in a certain manner that lays a foundation for monarchy. They proceed from one form of government to another, by easy transitions, and frequently under old names adopt a new constitution. The seeds of every form are lodged in human nature; they spring up and ripen with the season. The prevalence of a particular species is often derived from an imperceptible ingredient mingled in the soil.

WE are therefore to receive, with caution, the traditionary histories of ancient legislators, and founders of states. Their names have long been celebrated; their supposed plans have been admired; and what were probably the consequences of an early situation, is, in every instance, considered as an effect of design. An author and a work, like cause and effect, are perpetually coupled together. This is the simplest form under which we can consider the establishment of nations: and we ascribe to a previous design, what came to be known only by experience, what no human wisdom could foresee, and what, without the concurring humour and disposition of his age, no authority could enable an individual to execute.

If men, during ages of extenſive reflection, and employed in the ſearch of improvement, are wedded to their inſtitutions; and, labouring under many acknowledged inconveniencies, cannot break looſe from the trammels of cuſtom; what ſhall we ſuppoſe their humour to have been in the times of Romulus and Lycurgus? They were not ſurely more diſpoſed to embrace the ſchemes of innovators, or to ſhake off the impreſſions of habit: They were not more pliant and ductile, when their knowledge was leſs; not more capable of refinment, when their minds were more circumſcribed.

We imagine, perhaps, that rude nations muſt have ſo ſtrong a ſenſe of the defects under which they labour, and be ſo conſcious that reformations are requiſite in their manners, that they muſt be ready to adopt, with joy, every plan of improvement, and to receive every plauſible propoſal with implicit compliance. And we are thus inclined to believe, that the harp of Orpheus could effect, in one age, what the eloquence of Plato could not produce in another. We miſtake, however, the characteriſtic of ſimple ages: mankind then appear to feel the feweſt defects, and are then leaſt deſirous to enter on reformations.

The reality, in the mean time, of certain eſtabliſhments at Rome and at Sparta, cannot be diſputed: but it is probable, that the government of both theſe ſtates took its riſe from the ſituation and genius

genius of the people, not from the projects of single men; that the celebrated warrior and statesman, who are considered as the founders of those nations, only acted a superior part among numbers who were disposed to the same institutions; and that they left to posterity a renown, pointing them out as the inventors of many practices which had been already in use, and which helped to form their own manners and genius, as well as those of their countrymen.

It has been formerly observed, that, in many particulars, the customs of simple nations coincide with what is ascribed to the invention of early statesmen; that the model of republican government, the senate, and the assembly of the people; that even the equality of property, or the community of goods, were not reserved to the invention or contrivance of singular men.

If we consider Romulus as the founder of the Roman state, certainly he who killed his brother that he might reign alone, did not desire to come under restraints from the controuling power of the senate, nor to refer the councils of his sovereignty to the decision of a collective body. Love of dominion is, by its nature, averse to restraint; and this chieftain, like every leader in a rude age, probably found a class of men ready to intrude on his councils, and without whom he could not proceed. He met with occasions, on which, as at the sound of a trumpet

trumpet, the body of the people assembled, and took resolutions, which any individual might in vain dispute, or attempt to controul; and Rome, which commenced on the general plan of every artless society, found lasting improvements in the pursuit of temporary expedients, and digested her political frame in adjusting the pretensions of parties which arose in the state.

MANKIND, in very early ages of society, learn to covet riches, and to admire distinction: They have avarice and ambition, and are occasionally led by these passions to depredation and conquest; but in their ordinary conduct, are guided or restrained by different motives; by sloth or intemperance; by personal attachments, or personal animosities; which mislead from the attention to interest. These motives or habits render mankind, at times, remiss or outrageous: They prove the source of civil peace or of civil disorder, but disqualify those who are actuated by them, from maintaining any fixed usurpation; slavery and rapine, in the case of every community, are first threatened from abroad, and war, either offensive or defensive, is the great business of every tribe. The enemy occupy their thoughts; they have no lesure for domestic dissensions. It is the desire of every separate community, however, to secure itself; and in proportion as it gains this object, by strengthening its barrier, by weakening its enemy, or by procuring allies, the individual at home bethinks him of what he may

 gain

gain or lose for himself: The leader is disposed to enlarge the advantages which belong to his station; the follower becomes jealous of rights which are open to encroachment; and parties who united before, from affection and habit, or from a regard to their common preservation, disagree in supporting their several claims to precedence or profit.

When the animosities of faction are thus awakened at home, and the pretensions of freedom are opposed to those of dominion, the members of every society find a new scene upon which to exert their activity. They had quarrelled, perhaps, on points of interest; they had balanced between different leaders; but they had never united as citizens, to withstand the encroachments of sovereignty, or to maintain their common rights as a people. If the prince, in this contest, finds numbers to support, as well as to oppose his pretensions, the sword which was whetted against foreign enemies, may be pointed at the bosom of fellow-subjects, and every interval of peace from abroad, be filled with domestic war. The sacred names of Liberty, Justice, and Civil Order, are made to resound in public assemblies; and, during the absence of other alarms, give to society, within itself, an abundant subject of ferment and animosity.

If what is related of the little principalities which, in ancient times, were formed in Greece, in Italy, and over all Europe, agrees with the character we have

have given of mankind under the first impressions of property, of interest, and of hereditary distinctions; the seditions and domestic wars which followed in those very states, the expulsion of their kings, or the questions which arose concerning the prerogatives of the sovereign, or privilege of the subject, are agreeable to the representation which we now give of the first step toward political establishment, and the desire of a legal constitution.

What this constitution may be in its earliest form, depends on a variety of circumstances in the condition of nations: It depends on the extent of the principality in its rude state; on the degree of disparity to which mankind had submitted before they began to dispute the abuses of power: It depends likewise on what we term *accidents*, the personal character of an individual, or the events of a war.

Every community is originally a small one. That propensity by which mankind at first unite, is not the principle from which they afterwards act in extending the limits of empire. Small tribes, where they are not assembled by common objects of conquest or safety, are even averse to a coalition. If, like the real or fabulous confederacy of the Greeks for the destruction of Troy, many nations combine in pursuit of a single object, they easily separate again, and act anew on the maxims of rival states.

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There is, perhaps, a certain national extent, within which the passions of men are easily communicated from one, or a few, to the whole; and there are certain numbers of men who can be assembled, and act in a body. If, while the society is not enlarged beyond this dimension, and while its members are easily assembled, political contentions arise, the state seldom fails to proceed on republican maxims, and to establish democracy. In most rude principalities, the leader derived his prerogative from the lustre of his race, and from the voluntary attachment of his tribe: The people he commanded were his friends, his subjects, and his troops. If we suppose, upon any change in their manners, that they cease to revere his dignity, that they pretend to equality among themselves, or are seized with a jealousy of his assuming too much, the foundations of his power are already withdrawn. When the voluntary subject becomes refractory; when considerable parties, or the collective body, chuse to act for themselves; the small kingdom, like that of Athens, becomes of course a republic.

The changes of condition, and of manners, which, in the progress of mankind, raise up to nations, a leader and a prince, create, at the same time, a nobility, and a variety of ranks, who have, in a subordinate degree, their claim to distinction. Superstition, too, may create an order of men, who, under the title of priesthood, engage in the pursuit of a separate interest; who, by their union and

and firmness as a body, and by their incessant ambition, deserve to be reckoned in the list of pretenders to power. These different orders of men are the elements of whose mixture the political body is generally formed; each draws to its side some part from the mass of the people. The people themselves are a party upon occasion; and numbers of men, however classed and distinguished, become, by their jarring pretensions and separate views, mutual interruptions and checks; and have, by bringing to the national councils the maxims and apprehensions of a particular order, and by guarding a particular interest, a share in adjusting or preserving the political form of the state.

THE pretensions of any particular order, if not checked by some collateral power, would terminate in tyranny; those of a prince, in despotism; those of a nobility or priesthood, in the abuses of aristocracy; of a populace in the confusions of anarchy. These terminations, as they are never the professed, so are they seldom even the disguised object of party: But the measures which any party pursues, if suffered to prevail, will lead, by degrees, to every extreme.

IN their way to the ascendant they endeavour to gain, and in the midst of interruptions which opposite interests mutually give, liberty may have a permanent or a transient existence; and the constitution may bear a form and a character as various

as the casual combination of such multiplied parts can effect.

To bestow on communities some degree of political freedom, it is perhaps sufficient, that their members, either singly, or as they are involved with their several orders, should insist on their rights; that under republics, the citizen should either maintain his own equality with firmness, or restrain the ambition of his fellow-citizen within moderate bounds: that under monarchy, men of every rank should maintain the honours of their private or their public stations; and sacrifice, neither to the impositions of a court, nor to the claims of a populace, those dignities which are destined, in some measure, independent of fortune, to give stability to the throne, and to procure a respect to the subject.

AMIDST the contentions of party, the interests of the public, even the maxims of justice and candour, are sometimes forgotten; and yet those fatal consequences which such a measure of corruption seems to portend, do not unavoidably follow. The public interest is often secure, not because individuals are disposed to regard it as the end of their conduct, but because each, in his place, is determined to preserve his own. Liberty is maintained by the continued differences and oppositions of numbers, not by their concurring zeal in behalf of equitable government. In free states, therefore, the wisest laws

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are never, perhaps, dictated by the interest and spirit of any order of men: they are moved, they are opposed, or amended, by different hands; and come at last to express that medium and composition which contending parties have forced one another to adopt.

When we consider the history of mankind in this view, we cannot be at a loss for the causes which, in small communities, threw the balance on the side of democracy; which, in states more enlarged in respect to territory and numbers of people, gave the ascendant to monarchy; and which, in a variety of conditions and of different ages, enabled mankind to blend and unite the characters of different forms; and, instead of any of the simple constitutions we have mentioned *, to exhibit a medley of all.

In emerging from a state of rudeness and simplicity, men must be expected to act from that spirit of equality, or moderate subordination, to which they have been accustomed. When crouded together in cities, or within the compass of a small territory, they act by contagious passions, and every individual feels a degree of importance proportioned to his figure in the croud, and the smallness of its numbers. The pretenders to power and dominion appear in too familiar a light to impose upon the

* Part I, Sect. 10.

multitude,

multitude, and they have no aids at their call, by which they can bridle the refractory humours of a people who resist their pretensions. Theseus, King of Attica, we are told, assembled the inhabitants of its twelve cantons into one city. In this he took an effectual method to unite into one democracy, what were before the separate members of his monarchy, and to hasten the downfall of the regal power.

The monarch of an extensive territory has many advantages in maintaining his station. Without any grievance to his subjects, he can support the magnificence of a royal estate, and dazzle the imagination of his people, by that very wealth which themselves have bestowed. He can employ the inhabitants of one district against those of another; and while the passions that lead to mutiny and rebellion, can at any one time seize only on a part of his subjects, he feels himself strong in the possession of a general authority. Even the distance at which he resides from many of those who receive his commands, augments the mysterious awe and respect which are paid to his government.

With these different tendencies, accident and corruption, however, joined to a variety of circumstances, may throw particular states from their bias, and produce exceptions to every general rule. This has actually happened in some of the latter principalities of Greece, and modern Italy, in Sweden, Poland,

Poland, and the German Empire. But the united states of the Netherlands, and the Swiss cantons, are perhaps, the most extensive communities, which maintaining the union of nations, have, for any considerable time, resisted the tendency to monarchical government; and Sweden is the only instance of a republic established in a great kingdom on the ruins of monarchy.

The sovereign of a petty district, or a single city when not supported, as in modern Europe, by the contagion of monarchical manners, holds the sceptre by a precarious tenure, and is perpetually alarmed by the spirit of mutiny in his people, is guided by jealousy, and supports himself by severity, prevention, and force.

The popular and aristocratical powers in a great nation, as in the case of Germany and Poland may meet with equal difficulty in maintaining their pretensions; and in order to avoid their danger on the side of kingly usurpation, are obliged to with-hold from the supreme magistrate even the necessary trust of an executive power.

The states of Europe, in the manner of their first settlement, laid the foundations of monarchy, and were prepared to unite under regular and extensive governments. If the Greeks, whose progress at home terminated in the establishment of so many independent republics, had under Agamem-

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non effected a conqueſt and ſettlement in Aſia, it is probable, that they might have furniſhed an example of the ſame kind. But the original inhabitants of any country, forming many ſeparate cantons, came by ſlow degrees to that coalition and union into which conquering tribes in effecting their conqueſts, or in ſecuring their poſſeſſions, are hurried at once. Cæſar encountered ſome hundreds of independent nations in Gaul, whom even their common danger did not ſufficiently unite. The German invaders, who ſettled in the lands of the Romans, made, in the ſame diſtrict, a number of ſeparate eſtabliſhments, but far more extenſive than what the antient Gauls, by their conjunctions and treaties, or in the reſult of their wars, could after many ages have reached.

The ſeeds of great monarchies, and the roots of extenſive dominion, were every where planted with the colonies that divided the Roman empire. We have no exact account of the numbers, who, with a ſeeming concert, continued, during ſome ages, to invade and to ſeize this tempting prize. Where they expected reſiſtance, they endeavoured to muſter up a proportional force; and when they propoſed to ſettle, entire nations removed to ſhare in the ſpoil. Scattered over an extenſive province, where they could not be ſecure, without maintaining their union, they continued to acknowledge the leader under whom they had fought; and, like

like an army sent by divisions into separate stations, were prepared to assemble whenever occasion should require their united operations or counsels.

Every separate party had its post assigned, and every subordinate chieftain his possessions, from which he was to provide his own subsistence, and that of his followers. The model of government was taken from that of a military subordination, and a fief was the temporary pay of an officer proportioned to his rank *. There was a class of the people destined to military service, another to labour, and to cultivate lands for the benefit of their masters. The officer improved his tenure by degrees, first changing a temporary grant into a tenure for his life; and this also, upon the observance of certain conditions, into a grant including his heirs.

The rank of the nobles became hereditary in every quarter, and formed a powerful and permanent order of men in every state. While they held the people in servitude, they disputed the claims of their sovereign; they withdrew their attendance upon occasion, or turned their arms against him. They formed a strong and insurmountable barrier against a general despotism in the state; but they were themselves by means of their warlike retainers, the tyrants of every little district, and prevented the establishment of order, or any regular applications

* See Dr. Robertson's History of Scotland, B. 1. Dalrymple's Hist. of Feudal Tenures.

of law. They took the advantage of weak reigns or minorities, to push their incroachments on the sovereign; or having made the monarchy elective, they by successive treaties and stipulations at every election, limited or undermined the monarchical power. The prerogatives of the prince have been, in some instances, as in that of the German empire in particular, reduced to a mere title; and the national union itself preserved in the observance only of a few insignificant formalities.

WHERE the contest of the sovereign, and of his vassals, under hereditary and ample prerogatives annexed to the crown, had a different issue, the feudal lordships were gradually stript of their powers, the nobles were reduced to the state of subjects, and obliged to hold their honours, and exercise their jurisdictions, in a dependence on the prince. It was his supposed interest to reduce them to a state of equal subjection with the people, and to extend his own authority, by rescuing the labourer and the dependent from the oppressions of their immediate superiors.

IN this project the princes of Europe have variously succeeded. While they protected the people and thereby encouraged the practice of commercial and lucrative arts, they paved the way for despotism in the state; and with the same policy by which they relieved the subject from many oppressions, they increased the powers of the crown.

BUT

But where the people had by the constitution a representative in the government, and a head, under which they could avail themselves of the wealth they acquired, and of the sense of their personal importance, this policy turned against the crown; it formed a new power to restrain the prerogative, to establish the government of law, and to exhibit a spectacle new in the history of mankind; monarchy mixed with republic, and extensive territory, governed, during some ages, without military force.

Such were the steps by which the nations of Europe have arrived at their present establishments: in some instances, they have come to the possession of legal constitutions; in others, to the exercise of a mitigated despotism; or they continue to struggle with the tendency which they severally have to these different extremes.

The progress of empire, in the early ages of Europe, threatened to be rapid, and to bury the independent spirit of nations in a grave like that which the Ottoman conquerors found for themselves; and for the wretched race they had vanquished. The Romans had by slow degrees extended their empire; they had made every new acquisition in the result of a tedious war, and had been obliged to plant colonies, and to employ a variety of measures, to secure every new possession. But the feudal superior being animated, from the moment he gained

an eſtabliſhment, with a deſire of extending his territory, and of enlarging the liſt of his vaſſals, procured by merely beſtowing inveſtiture, the annexation of new provinces, and became the maſter of ſtates, before independent, without making any material innovation in the form of their policy.

Separate principalities were, like the parts of an engine, ready to be joined, and, like the wrought materials of a building, ready to be erected. They were in the reſult of their ſtruggles put together or taken aſunder with facility. The independence of weak ſtates was preſerved only by the mutual jealouſies of the ſtrong, or by the general attention of all to maintain a balance of power.

The happy ſyſtem of policy on which European ſtates have proceeded in preſerving this balance; the degree of moderation which is, in adjuſting their treaties, become habitual even to victorious and powerful monarchies, does honour to mankind, and may give hopes of a laſting felicity, to be derived from a prepoſſeſſion, never, perhaps, equally ſtrong in any former period, or among any number of nations, that the firſt conquering people will ruin themſelves, as well as their rivals.

It is in ſuch ſtates, perhaps, as in a fabric of a large dimenſion, that we can perceive moſt diſtinctly the ſeveral parts of which a political body

conſiſts;

consists; and observe that concurrence or opposition of interests, which serve to unite or to separate different orders of men, and lead them, by maintaining their several claims, to establish a variety of political forms. The smallest republics, however, consist of parts similar to these, and of members who are actuated by a similar spirit. They furnish examples of government diversified by the casual combinations of parties, and by the different advantages with which those parties engage in the conflict.

In every society there is a casual subordination, independent of its formal establishment, and frequently adverse to its constitution. While the administration and the people speak the language of a particular form, and seem to admit no pretensions to power, without a legal nomination in one instance, or without the advantage of hereditary honours in another, this casual subordination, possibly arising from the distribution of property, or from some other circumstance that bestows unequal degrees of influence, gives the state its tone, and fixes its character.

The plebeian order at Rome having been long considered as of an inferior condition, and excluded from the higher offices of magistracy, had sufficient force, as a body, to get this invidious distinction removed; but the individual still acting under the impressions of a subordinate rank, gave in every competition

competition his suffrage to a patrician, whose protection he had experienced, and whose personal authority he felt. By this means, the ascendency of the patrician families was, for a certain period, as regular as it could be made by the avowed maxims of aristocracy; but the higher offices of state being gradually shared by plebeians, the effects of former distinctions were prevented or weakened. The laws that were made to adjust the pretensions of different orders were easily eluded. The populace became a faction, and their alliance was the surest road to dominion. Clodius, by a pretended adoption into a plebeian family, was qualified to become tribune of the people; and Cæsar, by espousing the cause of this faction, made his way to usurpation and tyranny.

In such fleeting and transient scenes, forms of government are only modes of proceeding, in which successive ages differ from one another. Faction is ever ready to seize all occasional advantages; and mankind, when in hazard from any party, seldom find a better protection than that of its rival. Cato united with Pompey in opposition to Cæsar, and guarded against nothing so much as that reconciliation of parties, which was in effect to be a combination of different leaders against the freedom of the republic. This illustrious personage stood distinguished in his age like a man among children, and was raised above his opponents, as much by the justness of his understanding, and the extent of his penetration,

penetration, as he was by the manly fortitude and disinterestedness with which he strove to baffle the designs of a vain and childish ambition, that was operating to the ruin of mankind.

Although free constitutions of government seldom or never take their rise from the scheme of any single projector, yet are they often preserved by the vigilance, activity, and zeal of single men. Happy are they who understand and who chuse this object of care; and happy it is for mankind when it is not chosen too late. It has been reserved to signalize the lives of a Cato or a Brutus, on the eve of fatal revolutions; to foster in secret the indignation of Thrasea and Helvidius; and to occupy the reflections of speculative men in times of corruption. But even in such late and ineffectual examples, it was happy to know, and to value, an object which is so important to mankind. The pursuit, and the love of it, however unsuccessful, has thrown its principal lustre on human nature.

SECTION III.

Of National Objects in general, and of Establishments and Manners relating to them.

WHILE the mode of ſubordination is caſual, and forms of government take their riſe, chiefly from the manner in which the members of a ſtate have been originally claſſed, and from a variety of circumſtances that procure to particular orders of men a ſway in their country, there are certain objects that claim the attention of every government, that lead the apprehenſions and the reaſonings of mankind in every ſociety, and that not only furniſh an employment to ſtateſmen, but in ſome meaſure direct the community to thoſe inſtitutions, under the authority of which the magiſtrate holds his power. Such are the national defence, the diſtribution of juſtice, the preſervation and internal proſperity of the ſtate. If theſe objects be neglected, we muſt apprehend that the very ſcene in which parties contend for power, for privilege, or equality, muſt diſappear, and ſociety itſelf no longer exiſt.

THE conſideration due to theſe objects will be pleaded in every public aſſembly, and will produce, in every political conteſt, appeals to that common ſenſe and opinion of mankind, which, ſtruggling with the private views of individuals, and the claims of

of party, may be considered as the great legislator of nations.

THE measures required for the attainment of most national objects, are connected together, and must be jointly pursued; they are often the same. The force which is prepared for defence against foreign enemies, may be likeways employed to keep the peace at home: The laws made to secure the rights and liberties of the people, may serve as encouragements to population and commerce: And every community, without considering how its objects may be classed or distinguished by speculative men, is, in every instance, obliged to assume or to retain that form which is best fitted to preserve its advantages, or to avert its misfortunes.

NATIONS, however, like private men, have their favourite ends, and their principal pursuits, which diversify their manners, as well as their establishments. They even attain to the same ends by different means; and, like men who make their fortune by different professions, retain the habits of their principal calling in every condition at which they arrive. The Romans became wealthy in pursuing their conquests; and probably, for a certain period, increased the numbers of mankind, while their disposition to war seemed to threaten the earth with desolation. Some modern nations proceed to dominion and enlargement on the maxims of commerce; and while they only intend to accumulate

riches

riches at home, continue to gain an imperial ascendant abroad.

The characters of the warlike and the commercial are variously combined: They are formed in different degrees by the influence of circumstances that more or less frequently give rise to war, and excite the desire of conquest; of circumstances that leave a people in quiet to improve their domestic resources, or to purchase, by the fruits of their industry, from foreigners, what their own soil and their climate deny.

The members of every community are more or less occupied with matters of state, in proportion as their constitution admits them to share in the government, and summons up their attention to objects of a public nature. A people are cultivated or unimproved in their talents, in proportion as those talents are employed in the practice of arts, and in the affairs of society: They are improved or corrupted in their manners, in proportion as they are encouraged and directed to act on the maxims of freedom and justice, or as they are degraded into a state of meanness and servitude. But whatever advantages are obtained, or whatever evils are avoided, by nations, in any of these important respects, are generally considered as mere occasional incidents: They are seldom admitted among the objects of policy, or entered among the reasons of state.

We hazard being treated with ridicule, when we require political eſtabliſhments, merely to cultivate the talents of men, and to inſpire the ſentiments of a liberal mind: We muſt offer ſome motive of intereſt, or ſome hopes of external advantage, to animate the purſuits, or to direct the meaſures, of ordinary men. They would be brave, ingenious, and eloquent, only from neceſſity, or for the ſake of profit: They magnify the uſes of wealth, population, and the other reſources of war; but often forget that theſe are of no conſequence without the direction of able capacities, and without the ſupports of a national vigour. We may expect, therefore, to find among ſtates the biaſs to a particular policy taken from the regards to public ſafety; from the deſire of ſecuring perſonal freedom or private property; ſeldom from the conſideration of moral effects, or from a view to the real improvement of mankind.

SECT.

SECTION IV.

Of Population and Wealth.

WHEN we imagine what the Romans muſt have felt when the tidings came that the flower of their city had periſhed at Cannæ; when we think of what the orator had in his mind when he ſaid, "That the youth among the people was "like the ſpring among the ſeaſons;" when we hear of the joy with which the huntſman and the warrior is adopted, in America, to ſuſtain the honours of the family and the nation; we are made to feel the moſt powerful motives to regard the increaſe and preſervation of our fellow citizens. Intereſt, affection, and views of policy, combine to recommend this object; and it is treated with entire neglect only by the tyrant who miſtakes his own advantage, by the ſtateſman who trifles with the charge committed to his care, or by the people who are become corrupted, and who conſider their fellow-ſubjects as rivals in intereſt, and competitors in their lucrative purſuits.

AMONG rude ſocieties, and among ſmall communities in general, who are engaged in frequent ſtruggles and difficulties, the preſervation and increaſe of their members is a moſt important object. The American rates his defeat from the numbers of men he has loſt, or he eſtimates his victory from the

priſoners

prisoners he has made; not from his having remained the master of a field, or being driven from a ground on which he encountered his enemy. A man with whom he can associate in all his pursuits, whom he can embrace as his friend; in whom he finds an object to his affections, and an aid in his struggles, is to him the most precious accession of fortune.

Even where the friendship of particular men is out of the question, the society, being occupied in forming a party that may defend itself, or annoy its enemy, finds no object of greater moment than the increase of its numbers. Captives who may be adopted, or children of either sex who may be reared for the public, are accordingly considered as the richest spoil of an enemy. The practice of the Romans in admitting the vanquished to share in the privileges of their city, the rape of the Sabines, and the subsequent coalition with that people, were not singular or uncommon examples in the history of mankind. The same policy has been followed, and was natural and obvious where-ever the strength of a state consisted in the arms of a few, and where men were valued in themselves, without regard to estate or fortune.

In rude ages, therefore, while mankind subsist in small divisions, it should appear, that if the earth be thinly peopled, this defect does not arise from the negligence of those who ought to repair it.

It

It is even probable, that the most effectual course that could be taken to increase the species, would be, to prevent the coalition of nations, and to oblige mankind to act in such small bodies as would make the preservation of their numbers a principal object of their care. This alone, it is true, would not be sufficient: we must probably add the encouragement for rearing families, which mankind enjoy under a favourable policy, and the means of subsistence which they owe to the practice of arts.

The mother is unwilling to increase her offspring, and is ill provided to rear them, where she herself is obliged to undergo great hardships in the search of her food. In North America, we are told, that she joins to the reserves of a cold or a moderate temperament, the abstinencies to which she submits from the consideration of this difficulty. In her apprehension, it is matter of prudence, and of conscience to bring one child to the condition of feeding on venison, and of following on foot, before she will hazard a new burden in travelling the woods.

In warmer latitudes, by the different temperament, perhaps, which the climate bestows, and by a greater facility in procuring subsistence, the numbers of mankind increase, while the object itself is neglected; and the commerce of the sexes, without any concern for population, is made a subject of mere debauch. In some places, we are told, it is even

even made the object of a barbarous policy, to defeat or to restrain the intentions of nature. In the island of Formosa, the males are prohibited to marry before the age of forty; and females, if pregnant before the age of thirty six, have an abortion procured by order of the magistrate, who employs a violence that endangers the life of the mother, together with that of the child*.

In China, the permission given to parents to kill or to expose their children, was probably meant as a relief from the burden of a numerous offspring. But notwithstanding what we hear of a practice so repugnant to the human heart, it has not, probably, the effects in restraining population, which it seems to threaten; but, like many other institutions, has an influence the reverse of what it seemed to portend. The parents marry with this means of relief in their view, and the children are saved.

However important the object of population may be held by mankind, it will be difficult to find, in the history of civil policy, any wise or effectual establishments solely calculated to obtain it. The practice of rude or feeble nations is inadequate, or cannot surmount the obstacles which are found in their manner of life. The growth of industry, the endeavours of men to improve their arts, to extend their commerce, to secure their possessions, and to

* Collection of Dutch voyages.

eſtabliſh their rights, are indeed the moſt effectual means to promote population: but they ariſe from a different motive; they ariſe from regards to intereſt and perſonal ſafety. They are intended for the benefit of thoſe who exiſt, not to procure the increaſe of their numbers.

It is, in the mean time, of importance to know, that where a people are fortunate in their political eſtabliſhments, and ſucceſsful in the purſuits of induſtry, their population is likely to grow in proportion. Moſt of the other devices thought of for this purpoſe, only ſerve to fruſtrate the expectations of mankind, or to miſlead their attention.

In planting a colony, in ſtriving to repair the occaſional waſtes of peſtilence or war, the immediate contrivance of ſtateſmen may be uſeful; but if in reaſoning on the increaſe of mankind in general, we overlook their freedom, and their happineſs, our aids to population become weak and ineffectual. They only lead us to work on the ſurface, or to purſue a ſhadow, while we neglect the ſubſtantial concern; and in a decaying ſtate, make us tamper with palliatives, while the roots of an evil are ſuffered to remain. Octavius revived or inforced the laws that related to population at Rome: But it may be ſaid of him, and of many ſovereigns in a ſimilar ſituation, that they adminiſter the poiſon, while they are deviſing the remedy; and bring a damp and a palſy on the principles of life, while

they endeavour, by external applications to the skin, to restore the bloom of a decayed and sickly body.

It is indeed happy for mankind, that this important object is not always dependent on the wisdom of sovereigns, or the policy of single men. A people intent on freedom, find for themselves a condition in which they may follow the propensities of nature with a more signal effect, than any which the councils of state could devise. When sovereigns, or projectors, are the supposed masters of this subject, the best they can do, is to be cautious of hurting an interest they cannot greatly promote, and of making breaches they cannot repair.

"When nations were divided into small territories, and petty commonwealths, where each man had his house and his field to himself, and each county had its capital free and independent; what a happy situation for mankind," says Mr Hume, "how favourable to industry and agriculture, to marriage and to population!" Yet here were probably no schemes of the statesman for rewarding the married, or for punishing the single; for inviting foreigners to settle, or for prohibiting the departure of natives. Every citizen finding a possession secure, and a provision for his heirs, was not discouraged by the gloomy fears of oppression or want: and where every other function of nature was free, that which furnished the nursery

nursery could not be restrained. Nature has required the powerful to be just; but she has not otherwise intrusted the preservation of her works to their visionary plans. What fewel can the statesman add to the fires of youth? Let him only not smother it, and the effect is secure. Where we oppress or degrade mankind with one hand, it is vain, like Octavius, to hold out in the other, the baits of marriage, or the whip to barrenness. It is vain to invite new inhabitants from abroad, while those we already possess are made to hold their tenure with uncertainty; and to tremble, not only under the prospect of a numerous family, but even under that of a precarious and doubtful subsistence for themselves. The arbitrary sovereign, who has made this the condition of his subjects, owes the remains of his people to the powerful instincts of nature, not to any device of his own.

Men will croud where the situation is tempting, and, in a few generations, will people every country to the measure of its means of subsistence. They will even increase under circumstances that portend a decay. The frequent wars of the Romans, and of many a thriving community; even the pestilence, and the market for slaves, find their supply, if, without destroying the source, the drain become regular; and if an issue is made for the offspring, without unsettling the families from which they arise. Where a happier provision is made for mankind, the statesman, who by premiums to marriage,

riage, by allurements to foreigners, or by confining the natives at home, apprehends, that he has made the numbers of his people to grow, is often like the fly in the fable, who admired its succeſs, in turning the wheel, and in moving the carriage: he has only accompanied what was already in motion; he has daſhed with his oar, to haſten the cataract; and waved with his fan, to give ſpeed to the winds.

Projects of mighty ſettlement, and of ſudden population, however ſucceſsful in the end, are always expenſive to mankind. Above a hundred thouſand peaſants, we are told, were yearly driven, like ſo many cattle, to Peterſburgh, in the firſt attempts to repleniſh that ſettlement, and yearly periſhed for want of ſubſiſtence*. The Indian only attempts to ſettle in the neighbourhood of the plantain†, and while his family increaſes, he adds a tree to the walk.

If the plantain, the cocoa, or the palm, were ſufficient to maintain an inhabitant, the race of men in the warmer climates might become as numerous as the trees of the foreſt. But in many parts of the earth, from the nature of the climate, and the ſoil, the ſpontaneous produce being next to nothing, the means of ſubſiſtence are the fruits only of labour and ſkill. If a people, while they retain their

* Strachlenberg. † Dampier.

frugality.

frugality, increaſe their induſtry, and improve their arts, their numbers muſt grow in proportion. Hence it is, that the cultivated fields of Europe are more peopled than the wilds of America, or the plains of Tartary.

But even the increaſe of mankind which attends the accumulation of wealth, has its limits. The *neceſſary of life* is a vague and a relative term: It is one thing in the opinion of the ſavage; another in that of the poliſhed citizen: It has a reference to the fancy, and to the habits of living. While arts improve, and riches increaſe; while the poſſeſſions of individuals, or their proſpects of gain, come up to their opinion of what is required to ſettle a family, they enter on its cares with alacrity. But when the poſſeſſion, however redundant, falls ſhort of the ſtandard, and a fortune ſuppoſed ſufficient for marriage is attained with difficulty, population is checked, or begins to decline. The citizen, in his own apprehenſion, returns to the ſtate of the ſavage; his children, he thinks, muſt periſh for want; and he quits a ſcene overflowing with plenty, becauſe he has not the fortune which his ſuppoſed rank, or his wiſhes, require. No ultimate remedy is applied to this evil, by merely accumulating wealth; for rare and coſtly materials, whatever theſe are, continue to be ſought; and if ſilks and pearl are made common, men will begin to covet ſome new decorations, which the wealthy alone can procure. If they are indulged in their humour, their

their demands are repeated: For it is the continual increase of riches, not any measure attained, that keeps the craving imagination at ease.

Men are tempted to labour, and to practise lucrative arts, by motives of interest. Secure to the workman the fruit of his labour, give him the prospects of independence or freedom, the public has found a faithful minister in the acquisition of wealth, and a faithful steward in hoarding what he has gained. The statesman, in this, as in the case of population itself, can do little more than avoid doing mischief. It is well, if, in the beginnings of commerce, he knows how to repress the frauds to which it is subject. Commerce, if continued, is the branch in which men, committed to the effects of their own experience, are least apt to go wrong.

The trader, in rude ages, is short-sighted, fraudulent, and mercenary; but in the progress, and advanced state of his art, his views are enlarged, his maxims are established: He becomes punctual, liberal, faithful, and enterprising; and in the period of general corruption, he alone has every virtue, except the force to defend his acquisitions. He needs no aid from the state, but its protection; and is often in himself its most intelligent and respectable member. Even in China, we are informed, where pilfering, fraud, and corruption, are the reigning practice with all the other orders of men, the great merchant is ready to give, and

to procure confidence: While his countrymen act on the plans, and under the reſtrictions of a police adjuſted to knaves, he acts on the reaſons of trade, and the maxims of mankind.

If population be connected with national wealth, liberty and perſonal ſecurity is the great foundation of both: And if this foundation be laid in the ſtate, nature has ſecured the increaſe and induſtry of its members; the one by deſires the moſt ardent in the human frame, the other by a conſideration the moſt uniform and conſtant of any that poſſeſſes the mind. The great object of policy, therefore, with reſpect to both, is, to ſecure to the family its means of ſubſiſtence and ſettlement; to protect the induſtrious in the purſuit of his occupation; to reconcile the reſtrictions of police, and the ſocial affections of mankind, with their ſeparate and intereſted purſuits.

In matters of particular profeſſion, induſtry, and trade, the experienced practitioner is the maſter, and every general reaſoner is a novice. The object in commerce is to make the individual rich; the more he gains for himſelf, the more he augments the wealth of his country. If a protection be required, it muſt be granted; if crimes and frauds be committed, they muſt be repreſſed; and government can pretend to no more. When the refined politician would lend an active hand, he only multiplies interruptions and grounds of complaint;

plaint; when the merchant forgets his own intereſt to lay plans for his country, the period of viſion and chimera is near, and the ſolid baſis of commerce withdrawn. He might be told, that while he purſues his advantage, and gives no cauſe of complaint, the intereſt of commerce is ſafe.

The general police of France, proceeding on a ſuppoſition that the exportation of corn muſt drain the country where it has grown, had, till of late, laid that branch of commerce under a ſevere prohibition. The Engliſh landholder and the farmer had credit enough to obtain a premium for exportation, to favour the ſale of their commodity; and the event has ſhewn, that private intereſt is a better patron of commerce and plenty, than the refinements of ſtate. One nation lays the refined plan of a ſettlement on the continent of North America, and truſts little to the conduct of traders and ſhort-ſighted men; another leaves men to find their own poſition in a ſtate of freedom, and to think for themſelves. The active induſtry and the limited views of the one, made a thriving ſettlement; the great projects of the other were ſtill in idea.

But I willingly quit a ſubject in which I am not much converſant, and ſtill leſs engaged by the object for which I write. Speculations on commerce and wealth have been delivered by the ableſt writers; and the public will probably ſoon be fur-

niſhed with a theory of national œconomy, equal to what has ever appeared on any ſubject of ſcience whatever*. But in the view which I have taken of human affairs, nothing ſeems more important than the general caution which the authors to whom I refer ſo well underſtand, not to conſider theſe articles as making the ſum of national felicity, or the principal object of any ſtate. In ſcience we conſider our objects apart; in practice it were an error not to have them all in our view at once.

One nation, in ſearch of gold and of precious metals, neglect the domeſtic ſources of wealth, and become dependent on their neighbours for the neceſſaries of life: Another ſo intent on improving their internal reſources, and on increaſing their commerce, that they become dependent on foreigners for the defence of what they acquire. It is even painful in converſation to find the intereſt of merchants give the tone to our reaſonings, and to find a ſubject perpetually offered as the great buſineſs of national councils, to which any interpoſition of government is ſeldom, with propriety, applied, or never beyond the protection it affords.

We complain of a want of public ſpirit; but whatever may be the effect of this error in practice, in ſpeculation it is none of our faults: We reaſon

* By Mr Smith, author of the Theory of Moral Sentiment.

perpetually

perpetually for the public; but the want of national views were frequently better than the possession of those we express: We would have nations, like a company of merchants, think of nothing but monopolies, and the profit of trade; and, like them, too, intrust their protection to a force which they do not possess in themselves.

Because men, like other animals, are maintained in multitudes, where the necessaries of life are amassed, and the store of wealth is enlarged, we drop our regards for the happiness, the moral and political character of a people; and, anxious for the herd we would propagate, carry our views no farther than the stall and the pasture. We forget that the few have often made a prey of the many; that to the poor there is nothing so enticing as the coffers of the rich; and that when the price of freedom comes to be paid, the heavy sword of the victor may fall into the opposite scale.

Whatever be the actual conduct of nations in this matter, it is certain, that many of our arguments would hurry us, for the sake of wealth and of population, into a scene where mankind being exposed to corruption, are unable to defend their possessions; and where they are, in the end, subject to oppression and ruin. We cut off the roots, while we would extend the branches, and thicken the foliage.

It

It is poſſibly from an opinion that the virtues of men are ſecure, that ſome who turn their attention to public affairs, think of nothing but the numbers and wealth of a people: It is from a dread of corruption, that others think of nothing but how to preſerve the national virtues. Human ſociety has great obligations to both. They are oppoſed to one another only by miſtake; and even when united, have not ſtrength ſufficient to combat the wretched party, that refers every object to perſonal intereſt, and that cares not for the ſafety or increaſe of any ſtock but its own.

SECT.

SECTION V.

Of National Defence and Conqueſt.

IT is impoſſible to aſcertain how much of the policy of any ſtate has a reference to war, or to national ſafety. "Our legiſlator," ſays the Cretan in Plato, "thought that nations were by nature in "a ſtate of hoſtility: He took his meaſures ac- "cordingly; and obſerving that all the poſſeſſions "of the vanquiſhed pertain to the victor, he held "it ridiculous to propoſe any benefit to his coun- "try, before he had provided that it ſhould not "be conquered."

CRETE, which is ſuppoſed to have been a model of military policy, is commonly conſidered as the original from which the celebrated laws of Lycurgus were copied. Mankind, it ſeems, in every inſtance, muſt have ſome palpable object to direct their proceedings, and muſt have a view to ſome point of external utility, even in the choice of their virtues. The diſcipline of Sparta was military; and a ſenſe of its uſe in the field, more than the force of unwritten and traditionary laws, or the ſuppoſed engagement of the public faith obtained by the lawgiver, may have induced this people to perſevere in the obſervance of many rules, which to other nations do not appear neceſſary, except in the preſence of an enemy.

EVERY

EVERY inſtitution of this ſingular people gave a leſſon of obedience, of fortitude, and of zeal for the public: But it is remarkable that they choſe to obtain, by their virtues alone, what other nations are fain to buy with their treaſure; and it is well known, that, in the courſe of their hiſtory, they came to regard their diſcipline merely on account of its moral effects. They had experienced the happineſs of a mind courageous, diſintereſted, and devoted to its beſt affections; and they ſtudied to preſerve this character in themſelves, by reſigning the intereſts of ambition, and the hopes of military glory, even by ſacrificing the numbers of their people.

IT was the fate of Spartans who eſcaped from the field, not of thoſe who periſhed with Cleombrotus at Leuctra, that filled the cottages of Lacedemon with mourning and ſerious reflection*: It was the fear of having their citizens corrupted abroad, by intercourſe with ſervile and mercenary men, that made them quit the ſtation of leaders in the Perſian war, and leave Athens, during fifty years, to purſue, unrivalled, that career of ambition and profit, by which ſhe made ſuch acquiſitions of power and of wealth†.

WE have had occaſion to obſerve, that in every rude ſtate, the great buſineſs is war; and that in

* Xenophon.

† Thucydides, Book I.

barbarous

barbarous times, mankind, being generally divided into ſmall parties, are engaged in almoſt perpetual hoſtilities. This circumſtance gives the military leader a continued aſcendant in his country, and inclines every people, during warlike ages, to monarchical government.

The conduct of an army can leaſt of all ſubjects be divided: and we may be juſtly ſurpriſed to find, that the Romans, after many ages of military experience, and after having recently felt the arms of Hannibal, in many encounters, aſſociated two leaders at the head of the ſame army, and left them to adjuſt their pretenſions, by taking the command, each a day in his turn. The ſame people, however, on other occaſions, thought it expedient to ſuſpend the exerciſe of every ſubordinate magiſtracy, and in the time of great alarms, to intruſt all the authority of the ſtate in the hands of one perſon.

Republics have generally found it neceſſary, in the conduct of war, to place great confidence in the executive branch of their government. When a conſul at Rome had proclaimed his levies, and adminiſtered the military oath, he became from that moment maſter of the public treaſury, and of the lives of thoſe who were under his command*. The axe and the rods were no longer a mere badge of magiſtracy, or an empty pageant, in the hands

* Polybius.

of

of the lictor: They were, at the command of the father, ſtained with the blood of his own children; and fell, without appeal, on the mutinous and the diſobedient of every condition.

In every free ſtate, there is a perpetual neceſſity to diſtinguiſh the maxims of martial law from thoſe of the civil; and he who has not learned to give an implicit obedience, where the ſtate has given him a military leader, and to reſign his perſonal freedom in the field, from the ſame magnanimity with which he maintains it in the political deliberations of his country, has yet to learn the moſt important leſſon of civil ſociety, and is only fit to occupy a place in a rude, or in a corrupted ſtate, where the principles of mutiny and of ſervility being joined, the one or the other is frequently adopted in the wrong place.

From a regard to what is neceſſary in war, nations inclined to popular or ariſtocratical government, have had recourſe to eſtabliſhments that bordered on monarchy. Even where the higheſt office of the ſtate was in common times adminiſtered by a plurality of perſons, the whole power and authority belonging to it was, on particular occaſions, committed to one; and upon great alarms, when the political fabric was ſhaken or endangered, a monarchical power has been applied, like a prop, to ſecure the ſtate againſt the rage of the tempeſt.

Thus

Thus were the dictators occaſionally named at Rome, and the ſtadtholders in the United Provinces; and thus, in mixed governments, the royal prerogative is occaſionally enlarged, by the temporary ſuſpenſion of laws *, and the barriers of liberty appear to be removed, in order to veſt a dictatorial power in the hands of the king.

Had mankind, therefore, no view but to warfare, it is probable that they would continue to prefer monarchical government to any other; or at leaſt that every nation, in order to procure ſecret and united councils, would intruſt the executive power with unlimited authority. But, happily for civil ſociety, men have objects of a different ſort: and experience has taught, that although the conduct of armies requires an abſolute and undivided command; yet a national force is beſt formed, where numbers of men are inured to equality; and where the meaneſt citizen may conſider himſelf, upon occaſion, as deſtined to command as well as to obey. It is here that the dictator finds a ſpirit and a force prepared to ſecond his councils; it is here too that the dictator himſelf is formed, and that numbers of leaders are preſented to the public choice; it is here that the proſperity of a ſtate is independent of ſingle men, and that a wiſdom which never dies, with a ſyſtem of military arrangments permanent and re-

* In Britain, by the ſuſpenſion of the *Habeas Corpus.*

 gular,

gular, can, even under the greatest misfortunes, prolong the national struggle. With this advantage, the Romans, finding a number of distinguished leaders arise in succession, were at all times almost equally prepared to contend with their enemies of Asia or Africa; while the fortune of those enemies, on the contrary, depended on the casual appearance of singular men, of a Mithridates, or of a Hannibal.

The soldier, we are told, has his point of honour, and a fashion of thinking, which he wears with his sword. This point of honour, in free and uncorrupted states, is a zeal for the public; and war to them, is an operation of passions, not the mere pursuit of a calling Its good and its ill effects are felt in extremes: The friend is made to experience the warmest proofs of attachment, the enemy the severest effects of animosity. On this system the celebrated nations of antiquity made war under their highest attainments of civility, and under their greatest degrees of refinement.

In small and rude societies, the individual finds himself attacked in every national war; and none can propose to devolve his defence on another. "The king of Spain is a great prince," said an American chief to the governor of Jamaica, who was preparing a body of troops to join in an enterprise against the Spaniards: "do you propose to "make war upon so great a king with so small a

"force?" Being told that the forces he ſaw were to be joined by troops from Europe, and that the governor could then command no more: "Who "are theſe then," ſaid the American, "who form "this croud of ſpectators? are they not your "people? and why do you not all go forth to ſo "great a war?" He was anſwered, That the ſpectators were merchants, and other inhabitants, who took no part in the ſervice: "Would they "be merchants ſtill," continued this ſtateſman, "if "the King of Spain was to attack you here? For "my part, I do not think that merchants ſhould "be permitted to live in any country: when I go "to war, I leave no body at home but the women." It ſhould ſeem that this ſimple warrior conſidered merchants as a kind of neutral perſons, who took no part in the quarrels of their country; and that he did not know how much war itſelf may be made a ſubject of traffic; what mighty armies may be put in motion from behind the counter; how often human blood is, without any national animoſity, bought and ſold for bills of exchange; and how often the prince, the nobles, and the ſtateſmen, in many a poliſhed nation, might, in his account, be conſidered as merchants.

In the progreſs of arts and of policy, the members of every ſtate are divided into claſſes; and in the commencement of this diſtribution, there is no diſtinction more ſerious than that of the warrior and the pacific inhabitant; no more is required to place men

men in the relation of maſter and ſlave. Even when the rigours of an eſtabliſhed ſlavery abate, as they have done in modern Europe, in conſequence of a protection, and a property, allowed to the mechanic and labourer, this diſtinction ſerves ſtill to ſeparate the noble from the baſe, and to point out that claſs of men who are deſtined to reign and to domineer in their country.

It was certainly never foreſeen by mankind, that in the purſuit of refinement, they were to reverſe this order; or even that they were to place the government, and the military force of nations, in different hands. But is it equally unforeſeen, that the former order may again take place? and that the pacific citizen, however diſtinguiſhed by privilege and rank, muſt one day bow to the perſon with whom he has intruſted his ſword. If ſuch revolutions ſhould actually follow, will this new maſter revive in his own order the ſpirit of the noble and the free? Will he renew the characters of the warrior and the ſtateſman? Will he reſtore to his country the civil and military virtues? I am afraid to reply. Monteſquieu obſerves, that the government of Rome, even under the emperors, became, in the hands of the troops, elective and republican: But the Fabii or the Bruti were heard of no more, after the prætorian bands became the republic.

We have enumerated ſome of the heads under which a people, as they emerge from barbarity,

may come to be classed. Such are, the nobility, the people, the adherents of the prince; and even the priesthood have not been forgotten: When we arrive at times of refinement, the army must be joined to the list. The departments of civil government and of war being severed, and the pre-eminence being given to the statesman, the ambitious will naturally devolve the military service on those who are contented with a subordinate station. They who have the greatest share in the division of fortune, and the greatest interest in defending their country, having resigned the sword, must pay for what they have ceased to perform; and armies, not only at a distance from home, but in the very bosom of their country, are subsisted by pay. A discipline is invented to inure the soldier to perform, from habit, and from the fear of punishment, those hazardous duties, which the love of the public, or a national spirit, no longer inspire.

When we consider the breach that such an establishment makes in the system of national virtues, it is unpleasant to observe, that most nations who have run the career of civil arts, have, in some degree, adopted this measure. Not only states, which either have wars to maintain, or precarious possessions to defend at a distance; not only a prince jealous of his authority, or in haste to gain the advantage of discipline, are disposed to employ foreign troops, or to keep standing armies; but even republics,

republics, with little of the former occaſion, and none of the motives which prevail in monarchy, have been found to tread in the ſame path.

If military arrangements occupy ſo conſiderable a place in the domeſtic policy of nations, the actual conſequences of war are equally important in the hiſtory of mankind. Glory and ſpoil were the earlieſt ſubject of quarrels; a conceſſion of ſuperiority, or a ranſom, were the prices of peace. The love of ſafety, and the deſire of dominion, equally lead mankind to wiſh for acceſſions of ſtrength. Whether as victors or as vanquiſhed, they tend to a coalition; and powerful nations conſidering a province, or a fortreſs acquired on their frontier, as ſo much gained, are perpetually intent on extending the limits.

The maxims of conqueſt are not always to be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of ſelf-defence. If a neighbouring ſtate be dangerous, if it be frequently troubleſome, it is a maxim founded in the conſideration of ſafety, as well as of conqueſt, That it ought to be weakened or diſarmed: If, being once reduced, it be diſpoſed to renew the conteſt, it muſt from thenceforward be governed in form. Rome never avowed any other maxims of conqueſt; and ſhe every where ſent her inſolent armies, under the ſpecious pretence of procuring to herſelf and her allies a laſting peace, which ſhe alone would reſerve the power to diſturb.

The

The equality of thoſe alliances which the Grecian ſtates formed againſt each other, maintained, for a time, their independence and ſeparation; and that time was the ſhining and the happy period of their ſtory. It was prolonged more by the vigilance and conduct which they ſeverally applied, than by the moderation of their councils, or by any peculiarities of domeſtic policy which arreſted their progreſs. The victors were ſometimes contented, with merely changing to a reſemblance of their own forms the government of the ſtates they ſubdued. What the next ſtep might have been in the progreſs of impoſitions, is hard to determine. But when we conſider, that one party fought for the impoſition of tributes, another for the aſcendant in war, it cannot be doubted, that the Athenians, from a national ambition, and from the deſire of wealth, and the Spartans, though they originally only meant to defend themſelves, and their allies, were both, at laſt, equally willing to become the maſters of Greece; and were preparing for each other at home that yoke, which both, together with their confederates, were obliged to receive from abroad.

In the conqueſts of Philip, the deſire of ſelf-preſervation and ſecurity ſeemed to be blended with the ambition natural to princes. He turned his arms ſucceſſively to the quarters on which he found himſelf hurt, from which he had been alarmed or provoked: And when he had ſubdued the Greeks, he propoſed to lead them againſt their ancient enemy

of

of Perſia. In this he laid the plan which was carried into execution by his ſon.

The Romans, become the maſter of Italy, and the conquerors of Carthage, had been alarmed on the ſide of Macedon, and were led to croſs a new ſea in ſearch of a new field, on which to exerciſe their military force. In proſecution of their wars, from the earlieſt to the lateſt date of their hiſtory, without intending the very conqueſts they made, perhaps without foreſeeing what advantage they were to reap from the ſubjection of diſtant provinces, or in what manner they were to govern their new acquiſitions, they ſtill proceeded to ſeize what came ſucceſſively within their reach; and, ſtimulated by a policy which engaged them in perpetual wars, which led to perpetual victory and acceſſions of territory, they extended the frontier of a ſtate, which, but a few centuries before, had been confined within the ſkirts of a village, to the Euphrates, the Danube, the Weſer, the Forth, and the Ocean.

It is vain to affirm, that the genius of any nation is adverſe to conqueſt. Its real intereſts indeed moſt commonly are ſo; but every ſtate which is prepared to defend itſelf, and to obtain victories, is likeways in hazard of being tempted to conquer.

In Europe, where mercenary and diſciplined armies are every where formed, and ready to traverſe the earth, where, like a flood pent up by ſlender barks,

banks, they are only reſtrained by political forms, or a temporary balance of power; if the ſluices ſhould break, what inundations may we not expect to behold? Effeminate kingdoms and empires are ſpread from the ſea of Corea to the Atlantic ocean. Every ſtate, by the defeat of its troops, may be turned into a province; every army oppoſed in the field to-day may be hired to-morrow; and every victory gained, may give the acceſſion of a new military force to the victor.

The Romans, with inferior arts of communication both by ſea and land, maintained their dominion in a conſiderable part of Europe, Aſia, and Africa, over fierce and intractable nations: What may not the fleets and armies of Europe, with the acceſs they have by commerce to every part of the world, and the facility of their conveyance, effect, if that ruinous maxim ſhould prevail, That the grandeur of a nation is to be eſtimated from the extent of its territory; or, That the intereſt of any particular people conſiſts in reducing their neighbours to ſervitude?

SECTION VI.

Of Civil Liberty.

IF war, either for depredation or defence, were the principal object of nations, every tribe would, from its earlieſt ſtate, aim at the condition of a Tartar horde; and in all its ſucceſſes would haſten to the grandeur of a Tartar empire. The military leader would ſuperſede the civil magiſtrate; and preparations to fly with all their poſſeſſions, or to purſue with all their forces, would in every ſociety, make the ſum of their public arrangements.

HE who firſt on the banks of the Wolga, or the Jeniſca, had taught the Scythian to mount the horſe, to move his cottage on wheels, to haraſs his enemy alike by his attacks and his flights, to handle at full ſpeed the lance and the bow, and when beat from his ground, to leave his arrows in the wind to meet his purſuer; he who had taught his countrymen to uſe the ſame animal for every purpoſe of the dairy, the ſhambles, and the field of battle; would be eſteemed the founder of his nation; or like Ceres and Bacchus among the Greeks, would be inveſted with the honours of a god, as the reward of his uſeful inventions. Amidſt ſuch inſtitutions, the names and atchievements of Hercules and Jaſon might have been tranſmitted to poſterity, but thoſe

thoſe of Lycurgus or Solon, the heroes of political ſociety, could have gained no reputation, either fabulous or real, in the records of fame.

Every tribe of warlike barbarians may entertain among themſelves the ſtrongeſt ſentiments of affection and honour, while they carry to the reſt of mankind the aſpect of banditti and robbers*. They may be indifferent to intereſt, and ſuperior to danger; but our ſenſe of humanity, our regard to the rights of nations, our admiration of civil wiſdom and juſtice, even our effeminacy itſelf, make us turn away with contempt, or with horror, from a ſcene which exhibits ſo few of our good qualities, and which ſerves, ſo much to reproach our weakneſs.

It is in conducting the affairs of civil ſociety, that mankind find the exerciſe of their beſt talents, as well as the object of their beſt affections. It is in being grafted on the advantages of civil ſociety, that the art of war is brought to perfection; that the reſources of armies, and the complicated ſprings to be touched in their conduct, are beſt underſtood. The moſt celebrated warriors were alſo citizens: Oppoſed to a Roman, or a Greek, the chieftain of Thrace, of Germany, or Gaul, was a novice. The native of Pella learned the principles of his art from Epaminondas, and Pelopidas.

* D'Arvieux's Hiſtory of the Arabs.

If nations, as hath been obſerved in the preceding ſection, muſt adjuſt their policy on the proſpect of war from abroad, they are equally bound to provide for the attainment of peace at home. But there is no peace in the abſence of juſtice. It may ſubſiſt with diviſions, diſputes, and contrary opinions; but not with the commiſſion of wrongs. The injurious, and the injured, are, as implied in the very meaning of the terms, in a ſtate of hoſtility.

Where men enjoy peace, they owe it either to their mutual regards and affections, or to the reſtraints of law. Thoſe are the happieſt ſtates which procure peace to their members by the firſt of theſe methods: But it is ſufficiently uncommon to procure it even by the ſecond. The firſt would withhold the occaſions of war and of competition: The ſecond adjuſts the pretenſions of men by ſtipulations and treaties. Sparta taught her citizens not to regard intereſt: Other free nations ſecure the intereſt of their members, and conſider this as a principal part of their rights.

Law is the treaty to which members of the ſame community have agreed, and under which the magiſtrate and the ſubject continue to enjoy their rights, and to maintain the peace of ſociety. The deſire of lucre is the great motive to injuries: law therefore has a principal reference to property. It would aſcertain the different methods by which pro-

perty

perty may be acquired, as by preſcription, convey-ance, and ſucceſſion; and it makes the neceſſary proviſions for rendering the poſſeſſion of property ſecure.

BESIDE avarice, there are other motives from which men are unjuſt; ſuch are pride, malice, envy, and revenge. The law would eradicate the principles themſelves, or at leaſt prevent their effects.

FROM whatever motive wrongs are committed, there are different particulars in which the injured may ſuffer. He may ſuffer in his goods, in his perſon, or in the freedom of his conduct. Nature has made him maſter of every action which is not injurious to others. The laws of his particular ſociety intitle him perhaps to a determinate ſtation, and beſtow on him a certain ſhare in the government of his country. An injury, therefore, which in this reſpect puts him under any unjuſt reſtraint, may be called an infringement of his political rights.

WHERE the citizen is ſuppoſed to have rights of property and of ſtation, and is protected in the exerciſe of them, he is ſaid to be free; and the very reſtraints by which he is hindered from the commiſſion of crimes, are a part of his liberty. No perſon is free, where any perſon is ſuffered to do wrong with impunity. Even the deſpotic prince on his throne, is not an exception to this general rule. He

himſelf

himſelf is a ſlave, the moment he pretends that force ſhould decide any conteſt. The diſregard he throws on the rights of his people recoils on himſelf; and in the general uncertainty of all conditions, there is no tenure more precarious than his own.

From the different particulars to which men refer, in ſpeaking of liberty, whether to the ſafety of the perſon and the goods, the dignity of rank, or the participation of political importance, as well as from the different methods by which their rights are ſecured, they are led to differ in the interpretation of the term; and every free nation is apt to ſuppoſe that freedom is to be found only among themſelves; they meaſure it by their own peculiar habits and ſyſtem of manners.

Some having thought, that the unequal diſtribution of wealth is a grievance, required a new diviſion of property, as the foundation of public juſtice. This ſcheme is ſuited to democratical government; and in ſuch only it has been admitted with any degree of effect.

New ſettlements, like that of the people of Iſrael, and ſingular eſtabliſhments, like thoſe of Sparta and Crete, have furniſhed examples of its actual execution; but in moſt other ſtates, even the democratical ſpirit could attain no more than to prolong the ſtruggle for Agrarian laws; to procure, on occaſion, the expunging of debts; and to keep

keep the people in mind, under all the diſtinctions of fortune, that they ſtill had a claim to equality.

The citizen at Rome, at Athens, and in many republics, contended for himſelf, and his order. The Agrarian law was moved and debated for ages: It ſerved to awaken the mind; it nouriſhed the ſpirit of equality, and furniſhed a field on which to exert its force; but was never eſtabliſhed with any of its other and more formal effects.

Many of the eſtabliſhments which ſerve to defend the weak from oppreſſion, contribute, by ſecuring the poſſeſſion of property, to favour its unequal diviſion, and to increaſe the aſcendant of thoſe from whom the abuſes of power may be feared. Thoſe abuſes were felt very early both at Athens and Rome*.

It has been propoſed to prevent the exceſſive accumulation of wealth in particular hands, by limiting the increaſe of private fortunes, by prohibiting intails, and by with-holding the right of primogeniture in the ſucceſſion of heirs. It has been propoſed to prevent the ruin of moderate eſtates, and to reſtrain the uſe, and conſequently the deſire of great ones, by ſumptuary laws. Theſe different methods are more or leſs conſiſtent with the intereſts of commerce, and may be adopted,

* Plutarch in the life of Solon.——Livy.

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in different degrees, by a people whoſe national object is wealth: And they have their degree of effect, by inſpiring moderation, or a ſenſe of equity, and by ſtifling the paſſions by which mankind are prompted to mutual wrongs.

It appears to be, in a particular manner, the object of ſumptuary laws, and of the equal diviſion of wealth, to prevent the gratification of vanity, to check the oſtentation of ſuperior fortune, and, by this means, to weaken the deſire of riches, and to preſerve in the breaſt of the citizen that moderation and equity which ought to regulate his conduct.

This end is never perfectly attained in any ſtate where the unequal diviſion of property is admitted, and where fortune is allowed to beſtow diſtinction and rank. It is indeed difficult, by any methods whatever, to ſhut up this ſource of corruption. Of all the nations whoſe hiſtory is known with certainty, the deſign itſelf, and the manner of executing it, appear to have been underſtood in Sparta alone.

There property was indeed acknowledged by law; but in conſequence of certain regulations and practices, the moſt effectual, it ſeems, that mankind have hitherto found out. The manners that prevail among ſimple nations before the eſtabliſh- ment

ment of property, were in ſome meaſure preſerved *; the paſſion for riches was, during many ages, ſuppreſſed; and the citizen was made to conſider himſelf as the property of his country, not as the owner of a private eſtate.

IT was held ignominious either to buy or to ſell the patrimony of a citizen. Slaves were, in every family, intruſted with the care of its effects, and freemen were ſtrangers to lucrative arts; juſtice was eſtabliſhed on a contempt of the ordinary allurement to crimes; and the preſervatives of civil liberty applied by the ſtate, were the diſpoſitions that were made to prevail in the hearts of its members.

THE individual was relieved from every ſolicitude that could ariſe on the head of his fortune; he was educated, and he was employed for life in the ſervice of the public; he was fed at a place of common reſort, to which he could carry no diſtinction but that of his talents and his virtues; his children were the wards and the pupils of the ſtate; he himſelf was thought to be a parent, and a director to the youth of his country, not the anxious father of a ſeparate family.

THIS people, we are told, beſtowed ſome care in adorning their perſons, and were known from afar by the red or the purple they wore; but could not

* See Part II. Sect. 2.

make their equipage, their buildings, or their furniture, a ſubject of fancy, or what we call *taſte*. The carpenter and the houſe-builder were reſtricted to the uſe of the axe and the ſaw: Their workmanſhip muſt have been ſimple, and probably, in reſpect to its form, continued for ages the ſame. The ingenuity of the artiſt was employed in cultivating his own nature, not in adorning the habitations of his fellow-citizens.

On this plan, they had ſenators, magiſtrates, leaders of armies, and miniſters of ſtate; but no men of fortune. Like the heroes of Homer, they diſtributed honours by the meaſure of the cup and the platter. A citizen, who, in his political capacity, was the arbiter of Greece, thought himſelf honoured by receiving a double portion of plain entertainment at ſupper. He was active, penetrating, brave, diſintereſted, and generous; but his eſtate, his table, and his furniture, might, in our eſteem, have marred the luſtre of all his virtues. Neighbouring nations, however, applied for commanders to this nurſery of ſtateſmen and warriors, as we apply for the practitioners of every art to the countries in which they excel; for cooks to France, and for muſicians to Italy.

After all, we are, perhaps, not ſufficiently inſtructed in the nature of the Spartan laws and inſtitutions, to underſtand in what manner all the ends of this ſingular ſtate were obtained; but the admiration

admiration paid to its people, and the conſtant reference of contemporary hiſtorians to their avowed ſuperiority, will not allow us to queſtion the facts. "When I obſerved," ſays Xenophon, "that this "nation, though not the moſt populous, was the "moſt powerful ſtate of Greece, I was ſeized with "wonder, and with an earneſt deſire to know by "what arts it attained its pre-eminence; but when "I came to the knowledge of its inſtitutions, my "wonder ceaſed.——As one man excels another, "and as he who is at pains to cultivate his mind, "muſt ſurpaſs the perſon who neglects it; ſo the "Spartans ſhould excel every nation, being the "only ſtate in which virtue is ſtudied as the ob-"ject of government."

The ſubjects of property, conſidered with a view to ſubſiſtence, or even to enjoyment, have little effect in corrupting mankind, or in awakening the ſpirit of competition and of jealouſy; but conſidered with a view to diſtinction and honour, where fortune conſtitutes rank, they excite the moſt vehement paſſions, and abſorb all the ſentiments of the human ſoul: They reconcile avarice and meanneſs with ambition and vanity; and lead men through the practice of ſordid and mercenary arts to the poſſeſſion of a ſuppoſed elevation and dignity.

Where this ſource of corruption, on the contrary, is effectually ſtopped, the citizen is dutiful, and the magiſtrate upright; any form of govern-

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ment may be wiſely adminiſtered; places of truſt are likely to be well ſupplied; and by whatever rule office and power are beſtowed, it is likely that all the capacity and force that ſubſiſts in the ſtate will come to be employed in its ſervice: For on this ſuppoſition, experience and abilities are the only guides, and the only titles to public confidence; and if citizens be ranged into ſeparate claſſes, they become mutual checks by the difference of their opinions, not by the oppoſition of their intereſted deſigns.

We may eaſily account for the cenſures beſtowed on the government of Sparta, by thoſe who conſidered it merely on the ſide of its forms. It was not calculated to prevent the practice of crimes, by balancing againſt each other the ſelfiſh and partial diſpoſitions of men; but to inſpire the virtues of the ſoul, to procure innocence by the abſence of criminal inclinations, and to derive its internal peace from the indifference of its members to the ordinary motives of ſtrife and diſorder. It were trifling to ſeek for its analogy to any other conſtitution of ſtate, in which its principal characteriſtic and diſtinguiſhing feature is not to be found. The collegiate ſovereignty, the ſenate, and the ephori, had their counterparts in other republics, and a reſemblance has been found in particular to the government of Carthage*: But what affinity of conſequence can be found between a ſtate whoſe ſole object was

* Ariſtotle.

virtue, and another whoſe principal object was wealth; between a people whoſe aſſociated Kings, being lodged in the ſame cottage, had no fortune but their daily food; and a commercial republic, in which a proper eſtate was required as a neceſſary qualification for the higher offices of ſtate?

OTHER petty commonwealths expelled Kings, when they became jealous of their deſigns, or after having experienced their tyranny; here the hereditary ſucceſſion of Kings was preſerved: Other ſtates were afraid of the intrigues and cabals of their members in competition for dignities; here ſolicitation was required as the only condition upon which a place in the ſenate was obtained. A ſupreme inquiſitorial power was, in the perſons of the ephori, ſafely committed to a few men, who were drawn by lot, and without diſtinction, from every order of the people: And if a contraſt to this, as well as to many other articles of the Spartan policy, be required, it may be found in the general hiſtory of mankind.

BUT Sparta, under every ſuppoſed error of its form, proſpered for ages, by the integrity of its manners, and by the character of its citizens. When that integrity was broken, this people did not languiſh in the weakneſs of nations ſunk in effeminacy. They fell into the ſtream by which other ſtates had been carried in the torrent of violent paſſions, and in the outrage of barbarous times.

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They ran the career of other nations, after that of ancient Sparta was finifhed: They built walls, and began to improve their poffeffions, after they ceafed to improve their people; and on this new plan, in their ftruggle for political life, they furvived the fyftem of ftates that perifhed under the Macedonian dominion: They lived to act with another which arofe in the Achæan league; and were the laft community of Greece that became a village in the empire of Rome.

If it fhould be thought we have dwelt too long on the hiftory of this fingular people, it may be remembered, in excufe, that they alone, in the language of Xenophon, made virtue an object of ftate.

We muft be contented to derive our freedom from a different fource; to expect juftice from the limits which are fet to the powers of the magiftrate, and to rely for protection on the laws which are made to fecure the eftate, and the perfon of the fubject. We live in focieties, where men muft be rich, in order to be great; where pleafure itfelf is often purfued from vanity; where the defire of a fuppofed happinefs ferves to inflame the worft of paffions, and is itfelf the foundation of mifery; where public juftice, like fetters applied to the body, may, without infpiring the fentiments of candour and equity, prevent the actual commiffion of crimes.

Mankind come under this description the moment they are seized with their passions for riches and power. But their description in every instance is mixed: In the best there is an alloy of evil; in the worst a mixture of good. Without any establishments to preserve their manners, besides penal laws, and the restraints of police, they derive, from instinctive feelings, a love of integrity and candour, and, from the very contagion of society itself, an esteem for what is honourable and praiseworthy. They derive, from their union, and joint opposition to foreign enemies, a zeal for their own community, and courage to maintain its rights. If the frequent neglect of virtue as a political object, tend to discredit the understandings of men, its lustre, and its frequency, as a spontaneous offspring of the heart, will restore the honours of our nature.

In every casual and mixed state of the national manners, the safety of every individual, and his political consequence, depends much on himself, but more on the party to which he is joined. For this reason, all who feel a common interest, are apt to unite in parties; and, as far as that interest requires, mutually support each other.

Where the citizens of any free community are of different orders, each order has a peculiar set of claims and pretensions: relatively to the other members of the state, it is a party; relatively to the differences of interest among its own members, it may admit of numberless subdivisions. But in every state there

there are two intereſts very readily apprehended; that of a prince and his adherents, that of a nobility, or of any temporary faction, oppoſed to the people.

Where the ſovereign power is reſerved by the collective body, it appears unneceſſary to think of additional eſtabliſhments for ſecuring the rights of the citizen. But it is difficult, if not impoſſible, for the collective body to exerciſe this power in a manner that ſuperſedes the neceſſity of every other political caution.

If popular aſſemblies aſſume every function of government; and if, in the ſame tumultuous manner in which they can, with great propriety, expreſs their feelings, the ſenſe of their rights, and their animoſity to foreign or domeſtic enemies, they pretend to deliberate on points of national conduct, or to decide queſtions of equity and juſtice; the public is expoſed to manifold inconveniences; and popular governments would, of all others, be the moſt ſubject to errors in adminiſtration, and to weakneſs in the execution of public meaſures.

To avoid theſe diſadvantages, the people are always contented to delegate part of their power. They eſtabliſh a ſenate to debate, and to prepare, if not to determine, queſtions that are brought to the collective body for a final reſolution. They commit the executive power to ſome council of this

ſort,

ſort, or to a magiſtrate who preſides in their meetings. Under the uſe of this neceſſary and common expedient, even while democratical forms are moſt carefully guarded, there is one party of the few, another of the many. One attacks, the other defends; and they are both ready to aſſume in their turns. But though, in reality, a great danger to liberty ariſes on the part of the people themſelves, who, in times of corruption, are eaſily made the inſtruments of uſurpation and tyranny; yet, in the ordinary aſpect of government, the executive carries an air of ſuperiority, and the rights of the people ſeem always expoſed to incroachment.

Though on the day that the Roman people were aſſembled, the ſenators mixed with the croud, and the conſul was no more than the ſervant of the multitude; yet when this awful meeting was diſſolved, the ſenators met to preſcribe buſineſs for their ſovereign, and the conſul went armed with the axe and the rods, to teach every Roman, in his ſeparate capacity, the ſubmiſſion which he owed to the ſtate.

Thus, even where the collective body is ſovereign, they are aſſembled only occaſionally: and though on ſuch occaſions they determine every queſtion relative to their rights and their intereſts as a people, and can aſſert their freedom with irreſiſtible force; yet they do not think themſelves, nor are they in reality, ſafe, without a more con-

ſtant and more uniform power operating in their favour.

The multitude is every where ſtrong; but requires, for the ſafety of its members, when ſeparate as well as when aſſembled, a head to direct and to employ its ſtrength. For this purpoſe, the ephori, we are told, were eſtabliſhed at Sparta, the council of a hundred at Carthage, and the tribunes at Rome. So prepared, the popular party has, in many inſtances, been able to cope with its adverſaries, and has even trampled on the powers, whether ariſtocratical or monarchical, with which it would have been otherwiſe unable to contend. The ſtate, in ſuch caſes, commonly ſuffered by the delays, interruptions, and confuſions, which popular leaders, from private envy, or a prevailing jealouſy of the great, ſeldom failed to create in the proceedings of government.

Where the people, as in ſome larger communities, have only a ſhare in the legiſlature, they cannot overwhelm the collateral powers, who having likewiſe a ſhare, are in condition to defend themſelves: where they act only by their repreſentatives, their force may be uniformly employed. And they may make part in a conſtitution of government more laſting than any of thoſe in which the people poſſeſſing or pretending to the entire legiſlature, are, when aſſembled, the tyrants, and, when diſperſed, the ſlaves, of a diſtempered ſtate. In governments properly

properly mixed, the popular interest, finding a counterpoise in that of the prince or of the nobles, a balance is actually established between them, in which the public freedom and the public order are made to consist.

From some such casual arrangement of different interests, all the varieties of mixed government proceed; and on that degree of consideration which every separate interest can procure to itself, depends the equity of the laws they enact, and the necessity they are able to impose, of adhering strictly to the terms of law in its execution. States are accordingly unequally qualified to conduct the business of legislation, and unequally fortunate in the completeness, and regular observance, of their civil code.

In democratical establishments, citizens, feeling themselves possessed of the sovereignty, are not equally anxious, with the subject of other governments, to have their rights explained, or secured, by actual statute. They trust to personal vigour, to the support of party, and to the sense of the public.

If the collective body perform the office of judge, as well as of legislator, they seldom think of devising rules for their own direction, and are found still more seldom to follow any determinate rule, after it is made. They dispense, at one time, with what they enacted at another; and in their judicative, perhaps even more than in their legislative, capacity,

capacity, are guided by paſſions and partialities that ariſe from circumſtances of the caſe before them.

But under the ſimpleſt governments of a different ſort, whether ariſtocracy or monarchy, there is a neceſſity for law, and there are a variety of intereſts to be adjuſted in framing every ſtatute. The ſovereign wiſhes to give ſtability and order to adminiſtration, by expreſs and promulgated rules. The ſubject wiſhes to know the conditions and limits of his duty. He acquieſces, or he revolts, according as the terms on which he is made to live with the ſovereign, or with his fellow-ſubjects, are, or are not, conſiſtent with the ſenſe of his rights.

Neither the monarch, nor the council of nobles, where either is poſſeſſed of the ſovereignty, can pretend to govern, or to judge at diſcretion. No magiſtrate, whether temporary or hereditary, can with ſafety neglect that reputation for juſtice and equity, from which his authority, and the reſpect that is paid to his perſon, are in a great meaſure derived. Nations, however, have been fortunate in the tenor, and in the execution of their laws, in proportion as they have admitted every order of the people, by repreſentation or otherwiſe, to an actual ſhare of the legiſlature. Under eſtabliſhments of this ſort, law is literally a treaty, to which the parties concerned have agreed, and have given their opinion in ſettling its terms. The intereſts to be affected by a law, are likewiſe conſulted in making it.

it. Every claſs propounds an objection, ſuggeſts an addition or an amendment of its own. They proceed to adjuſt, by ſtatute, every ſubject of controverſy: And while they continue to enjoy their freedom, they continue to multiply laws, and to accumulate volumes, as if they could remove every poſſible ground of diſpute, and were ſecure of their rights, merely by having put them in writing.

Rome and England, under their mixed governments, the one inclining to democracy, and the other to monarchy, have proved the great legiſlators among nations. The firſt has left the foundation, and great part of the ſuperſtructure of its civil code, to the continent of Europe: The other, in its iſland, has carried the authority and government of law to a point of perfection, which they never before attained in the hiſtory of mankind.

Under ſuch favourable eſtabliſhments, known cuſtoms, the practice and deciſions of courts, as well as poſitive ſtatutes, acquire the authority of laws; and every proceeding is conducted by ſome fixed and determinate rule. The beſt and moſt effectual precautions are taken for the impartial application of rules to particular caſes; and it is remarkable, that, in the two examples we have mentioned, a ſurpriſing coincidence is found in the ſingular methods of their juriſdiction. The people in both reſerved in a manner the office of judgment to themſelves, and brought the deciſion of civil rights,

rights, or of criminal queſtions, to the tribunal of peers, who, in judging of their fellow-citizens, preſcribed a condition of life for themſelves.

It is not in mere laws, after all, that we are to look for the ſecurities to juſtice, but in the powers by which thoſe laws have been obtained, and without whoſe conſtant ſupport they muſt fall to diſuſe. Statutes ſerve to record the rights of a people, and ſpeak the intention of parties to defend what the letter of the law has expreſſed: But without the vigour to maintain what is acknowledged as a right, the mere record, or the feeble intention, is of little avail.

A populace rouſed by oppreſſion, or an order of men poſſeſſed of temporary advantage, have obtained many charters, conceſſions, and ſtipulations, in favour of their claims; but where no adequate preparation was made to preſerve them, the written articles were often forgotten, together with the occaſion on which they were framed.

The hiſtory of England, and of every free country, abounds with the example of ſtatutes enacted when the people or their repreſentatives aſſembled, but never executed when the crown or the executive was left to itſelf. The moſt equitable laws on paper are conſiſtent with the utmoſt deſpotiſm in adminiſtration. Even the form of trial by juries in England had its authority in law, while the

the proceedings of courts were arbitrary and oppressive.

We must admire, as the key-stone of civil liberty, the statute which forces the secrets of every prison to be revealed, the cause of every commitment to be declared, and the person of the accused to be produced, that he may claim his enlargement, or his trial, within a limited time. No wiser form was ever opposed to the abuses of power. But it requires a fabric no less than the whole political constitution of Great Britain, a spirit no less than the refractory and turbulent zeal of this fortunate people, to secure its effects.

If even the safety of the person, and the tenure of property, which may be so well defined in the words of a statute, depend, for their preservation, on the vigour and jealousy of a free people, and on the degree of consideration which every order of the state maintains for itself; it is still more evident, that what we have called the political freedom, or the right of the individual to act in his station for himself and the public, cannot be made to rest on any other foundation. The estate may be saved, and the person released, by the forms of a civil procedure; but the rights of the mind cannot be sustained by any other force but its own.

SECTION VII.

Of the History of Arts.

WE have already obferved, that art is natural to man; and that the fkill he acquires after many ages of practice, is only the improvement of a talent he poffeffed at the firft. Vitruvius finds the rudiments of architecture in the form of a Scythian cottage. The armourer may find the firft productions of his calling in the fling and the bow; and the fhip-wright of his in the canoe of the favage. Even the hiftorian and the poet may find the original effays of their arts in the tale, and the fong, which celebrate the wars, the loves, and the adventures of men in their rudeft condition.

DESTINED to cultivate his own nature, or to mend his fituation, man finds a continual fubject of attention, ingenuity, and labour. Even where he does not propofe any perfonal improvement, his faculties are ftrengthened by thofe very exercifes in which he feems to forget himfelf: His reafon and his affections are thus profitably engaged in the affairs of fociety; his invention and his fkill are exercifed in procuring his accommodations and his food; his particular purfuits are prefcribed to him by circumftances of the age, and of the country in which he lives: In one fituation he is occupied with

wars and political deliberations; in another, with the care of his interest, of his personal ease, or conveniency. He suits his means to the ends he has in view; and, by multiplying contrivances, proceeds by degrees, to the perfection of his arts. In every step of his progress, if his skill be increased, his desire must likeways have time to extend: And it would be as vain to suggest a contrivance of which he slighted the use, as it would be to tell him of blessings which he could not command.

Ages are generally supposed to have borrowed from those who went before them, and nations to have received their portion of learning or of art from abroad. The Romans are thought to have learned from the Greeks, and the moderns of Europe from both. From a few examples of this sort, we learn to consider every science or art as derived, and admit of nothing original in the practice or manners of any people. The Greek was a copy of the Egyptian, and even the Egyptian was an imitator, though we have lost sight of the model on which he was formed.

It is known, that men improve by example and intercourse; but in the case of nations, whose members excite and direct each other, why seek from abroad the origin of arts, of which every society, having the principles in itself, only requires a favourable occasion to bring them to light? When such occasion presents itself to any people they

generally ſeize it; and while it continues, they improve the inventions to which it gave riſe among themſelves, or they willingly copy from others: But they never employ their own invention, nor look abroad, for inſtruction on ſubjects that do not lye in the way of their common purſuits; they never adopt a refinement of which they have not diſcovered the uſe.

INVENTIONS, we frequently obſerve, are accidental; but it is probable, that an accident which eſcapes the artiſt in one age, may be ſeized by one who ſucceeds him, and who is better apprized of its uſe. Where circumſtances are favourable, and where a people is intent on the objects of any art, every invention is preſerved, by being brought into general practice; every model is ſtudied, and every accident is turned to account. If nations actually borrow from their neighbours, they probably borrow only what they are nearly in a condition to have invented themſelves.

ANY ſingular practice of one country, therefore, is ſeldom transferred to another, till the way be prepared by the introduction of ſimilar circumſtances. Hence our frequent complaints of the dulneſs or obſtinacy of mankind, and of the dilatory communication of arts, from one place to another. While the Romans adopted the arts of Greece, the Thracians and Illyrians continued to behold them with indifference. Thoſe arts were, during one period,

period, confined to the Greek colonies, and during another, to the Roman. Even where they were ſpread by a viſible intercourſe, they were ſtill received by independent nations with the ſlowneſs of invention. They made a progreſs not more rapid at Rome than they had done at Athens; and they paſſed to the extremities of the Roman empire, only in company with new colonies, and joined to Italian policy.

THE modern race, who came abroad to the poſſeſſion of cultivated provinces, retained the arts they had practiſed at home: the new maſter hunted the boar, or paſtured his herds, where he might have raiſed a plentiful harveſt: he built a cottage in the view of a palace: he buried, in one common ruin, the edifices, ſculptures, paintings, and libraries, of the former inhabitant: he made a ſettlement upon a plan of his own, and opened anew the ſource of inventions without perceiving from a diſtance to what length their progreſs might lead his poſterity. The cottage of the preſent race, like that of the former, by degrees enlarged its dimenſions; public buildings acquired a magnificence in a new taſte. Even this taſte came, in a courſe of ages, to be exploded, and the people of Europe recurred to the models which their fathers deſtroyed, and wept over the ruins which they could not reſtore.

THE literary remains of antiquity were ſtudied and imitated, only after the original genius of modern

dern nations had broke forth: the rude efforts of poetry in Italy and Provence, resembled those of the Greeks and the ancient Romans. How far the merits of our works might, without the aid of their models, have risen by successive improvements, or whether we have gained more by imitation than we have lost by quitting our native system of thinking and our vein of fable, must be left to conjecture. We are certainly indebted to them for the materials, as well as the form of many of our compositions; and without their example, the strain of our literature, together with that of our manners and policy, would have been different from what they at present are. This much however may be said with assurance, that although the Roman and the modern literature savour alike of the Greek original, yet mankind in either instance would not have drank of this fountain, unless they had been hastening to open springs of their own.

Sentiment and fancy, the use of the hand or the head are not inventions of particular men; and the flourishing of arts that depend on them, are, in the case of any people, a proof rather of political felicity at home, than of any instruction received from abroad, or of any natural superiority in point of industry or talents.

When the attentions of men are turned toward particular subjects, when the acquisitions of one age are left entire to the next, when every indivi-

dual

dual is protected in his place, and left to pursue the suggestion of his wants, inventions accumulate; and it is difficult to find the original of any art. The steps which lead to perfection are many; and we are at a loss on whom to bestow the greatest share of our praise; on the first or on the last who may have borne a part in the progress.

SECT.

SECTION VIII.

Of the History of Literature.

IF we may rely on the general obfervations contained in the laft fection, the literary, as well as mechanical arts, being a natural produce of the human mind, will rife fpontaneoufly where-ever men are happily placed; and in certain nations it is not more neceffary to look abroad for the origin of literature, than it is for the fuggeftion of any of the pleafures or exercifes in which mankind, under a ftate of profperity and freedom, are fufficiently inclined to indulge themfelves.

WE are apt to confider arts as foreign and adventitious to the nature of man: But there is no art that did not find its occafion in human life, and that was not, in fome one or other of the fituations in which our fpecies is found, fuggefted as a means for the attainment of fome ufeful end. The mechanic and commercial arts took their rife from the love of property, and were encouraged by the profpects of fafety and of gain: The literary and liberal arts took their rife from the underftanding, the fancy, and the heart. They are mere exercifes of the mind in fearch of its peculiar pleafures and occupations; and are promoted by circumftances that fuffer the mind to enjoy itfelf.

MEN

MEN are equally engaged by the paſt, the preſent, and the future, and are prepared for every occupation that gives ſcope to their powers. Productions, therefore, whether of narration, fiction, or reaſoning, that tend to employ the imagination, or move the heart, continue for ages a ſubject of attention, and a ſource of delight. The memory of human tranſactions being preſerved in tradition or writing, is the natural gratification of a paſſion that conſiſts of curioſity, admiration, and the love of amuſement.

BEFORE many books are written, and before ſcience is greatly advanced, the productions of mere genius are ſometimes complete: The performer requires not the aid of learning where his deſcription or ſtory relates to near and contiguous objects; where it relates to the conduct and characters of men with whom he himſelf has acted, and in whoſe occupations and fortunes he himſelf has borne a part.

WITH this advantage, the poet is the firſt to offer the fruits of his genius, and to lead in the career of thoſe arts by which the mind is deſtined to exhibit its imaginations, and to expreſs its paſſions. Every tribe of barbarians have their paſſionate or hiſtoric rhymes, which contain the ſuperſtition, the enthuſiaſm, and the admiration of glory, with which the breaſts of men, in the earlieſt ſtate of ſociety, are poſſeſſed. They delight in verſification, either

becauſe

becauſe the cadence of numbers is natural to the language of ſentiment, or becauſe, not having the advantage of writing, they are obliged to bring the ear in aid of the memory, in order to facilitate the repetition, and inſure the preſervation of their works.

When we attend to the language which ſavages employ on any ſolemn occaſion, it appears that man is a poet by nature. Whether at firſt obliged by the mere defects of his tongue, and the ſcantineſs of proper expreſſions, or ſeduced by a pleaſure of the fancy in ſtating the analogy of its objects, he clothes every conception in image and metaphor. "We have planted the tree of peace," ſays an American orator; "we have buried the axe under "its roots: We will henceforth repoſe under its "ſhade; we will join to brighten the chain that "binds our nations together." Such are the collections of metaphor which thoſe nations employ in their public harangues. They have likeways already adopted thoſe lively figures, and that daring freedom of language, which the learned have afterwards found ſo well fitted to expreſs the rapid tranſitions of the imagination, and the ardours of a paſſionate mind.

If we are required to explain, how men could be poets, or orators, before they were aided by the learning of the ſcholar and the critic? we may inquire, in our turn, how bodies could fall by their weight,

weight, before the laws of gravitation were recorded in books? Mind, as well as body, has laws, which are exemplified in the course of nature, and which the critic collects only after the example has shewn what they are.

Occasioned, probably, by the physical connection we have mentioned, between the emotions of a heated imagination, and the impressions received from music and pathetic sounds, every tale among rude nations is repeated in verse and is made to take the form of a song. The early history of all nations is uniform in this particular. Priests, statesmen, and philosophers, in the first ages of Greece, delivered their instructions in poetry, and mixed with the dealers in music and heroic fable.

It is not so surprising, however, that poetry should be the first species of composition in every nation, as it is, that a style apparently so difficult, and so far removed from ordinary use, should be almost as universally the first to attain its maturity. The most admired of all poets lived beyond the reach of history, almost of tradition. The artless song of the savage, the heroic legend of the bard, have sometimes a magnificent beauty, which no change of language can improve, and no refinements of the critic reform *.

* See Translations of Gallic Poetry, by James M'Pherson.

UNDER the ſuppoſed diſadvantage of a limited knowledge, and a rude apprehenſion, the ſimple poet has impreſſions that more than compenſate the defects of his ſkill. The beſt ſubjects of poetry, the characters of the violent and the brave, the generous and the intrepid, great dangers, trials of fortitude and fidelity, are exhibited within his view, or are delivered in traditions which animate like truth, becauſe they are equally believed. He is not engaged in recalling, like Virgil or Taſſo, the ſentiments or ſcenery of an age remote from his own: he needs not be told by the critic †, to recollect what another would have thought, or in what manner another would have expreſſed his conception. The ſimple paſſions, friendſhip, reſentment, and love, are the movements of his own mind, and he has no occaſion to copy. Simple and vehement in his conceptions and feelings, he knows no diverſity of thought, or of ſtyle, to miſlead or to exerciſe his judgment. He delivers the emotions of the heart, in words ſuggeſted by the heart: for he knows no other. And hence it is, that while we admire the judgment and invention of Virgil, and of other later poets, theſe terms appear miſapplied to Homer. Though intelligent, as well as ſublime, in his conceptions, we cannot anticipate the lights of his underſtanding, nor the movements of his heart: he appears to ſpeak from inſpiration, not from invention; and to be guided in the

† See Longinus.

choice

choice of his thoughts and expressions by a superna- tural instinct, not by reflection.

THE language of early ages, is in one respect, simple and confined; in another, it is varied and free: it allows liberties, which, to the poet of after times, are denied.

IN rude ages men are not separated by distinctions of rank or profession. They live in one manner, and speak one dialect. The bard is not to chuse his expression among the singular accents of different conditions. He has not to guard his language from the peculiar errors of the mechanic, the peasant, the scholar, or the courtier, in order to find that elegant propriety, and just elevation, which is free from the vulgar of one class, the pedantic of the second, or the flippant of the third. The name of every object, and of every sentiment, is fixed; and if his conception has the dignity of nature, his expression will have a purity which does not depend on his choice.

WITH this apparent confinement in the choice of his words, he is at liberty to break through the ordinary modes of construction; and in the form of a language not established by rules, may find for himself a cadence agreeable to the tone of his mind. The liberty he takes, while his meaning is striking, and his language is raised, appears an improvement, not a trespass on grammar. He delivers a style to the

the ages that follow, and becomes a model from which his posterity judge.

BUT whatever may be the early disposition of mankind to poetry, or the advantages they possess in cultivating this species of literature; whether the early maturity of poetical compositions arise from their being the first studied, or from their having a charm to engage persons of the liveliest genius, who are best qualified to improve the eloquence of their native tongue; it is a remarkable fact, that, not only in countries where every vein of composition was original, and was opened in the order of natural succession; but even at Rome, and in modern Europe, where the learned began early to practise on foreign models, we have poets of every nation, who are perused with pleasure, while the prose writers of the same ages are neglected.

As Sophocles and Euripides preceded the historians and moralists of Greece, not only Nævius and Ennius, who wrote the Roman history in verse, but Lucilius, Plautus, Terence, and we may add Lucretius, were prior to Cicero, Sallust, or Cæsar. Dante and Petrarch went before any good prose writer in Italy; Corneille and Racine brought on the fine age of prose compositions in France; and we had in England, not only Chaucer and Spenser, but Shakespear and Milton, while our attempts in history or science were yet in their infancy; and de-

ſerve our attention, only for the ſake of the matter they treat.

HELLANICUS, who is reckoned among the firſt proſe writers in Greece, and who immediately preceded, or was the contemporary of Herodotus, ſet out with declaring his intention to remove from hiſtory the wild repreſentations, and extravagant fictions, with which it had been diſgraced by the poets*. The want of records or authorities, relating to any diſtant tranſactions, may have hindered him, as it did his immediate ſucceſſor, from giving truth all the advantage it might have reaped from this tranſition to proſe. There are, however, ages in the progreſs of ſociety, when ſuch a propoſition muſt be favourably received. When men become occupied on the ſubjects of policy, or commercial arts, they wiſh to be informed and inſtructed, as well as moved. They are intereſted by what was real in paſt tranſactions. They build on this foundation, the reflections and reaſonings they apply to preſent affairs, and wiſh to receive information on the ſubject of different purſuits, and of projects in which they begin to be engaged. The manners of men, the practice of ordinary life, and the form of ſociety, furniſh their ſubjects to the moral and political writer. Mere ingenuity, juſtneſs of ſentiment, and correct repreſentation, though conveyed in ordinary language, are underſtood to con-

* Quoted by Demetrius Phalerius.

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ſtitute literary merit, and by applying to reaſon more than to the imagination and paſſions, meet with a reception that is due to the inſtruction they bring.

The talents of men come to be employed in a variety of affairs, and their inquiries directed to different ſubjects. Knowledge is important in every department of civil ſociety, and requiſite to the practice of every art. The ſcience of nature, morals, politics, and hiſtory, find their ſeveral admirers; and even poetry itſelf, which retains its former ſtation in the region of warm imagination and enthuſiaſtic paſſion, appears in a growing variety of forms.

Matters have proceeded ſo far, without the aid of foreign examples, or the direction of ſchools. The cart of Theſpis was changed into a theatre, not to gratify the learned, but to pleaſe the Athenian populace: And the prize of poetical merit was decided by this populace equally before and after the invention of rules. The Greeks were unacquainted with every language but their own; and if they became learned, it was only by ſtudying what they themſelves had produced: The childiſh mythology, which they are ſaid to have copied from Aſia, was equally of little avail in promoting their love of arts, or their ſucceſs in the practice of them.

When the hiſtorian is ſtruck with the events he has witneſſed, or heard; when he is excited to relate

late them by his reflections or his passions; when the statesman, who is required to speak in public, is obliged to prepare for every remarkable appearance in studied harangues; when conversation becomes extensive and refined; and when the social feelings and reflections of men are committed to writing, a system of learning may arise from the bustle of an active life. Society itself is the school, and its lessons are delivered in the practice of real affairs. An author writes from observations he has made on his subject, not from the suggestion of books; and every production carries the mark of his character as a man, not of his mere proficiency as a student or scholar. It may be made a question, whether the trouble of seeking for distant models, and of wading for instruction, through dark allusions and languages unknown, might not have quenched his fire, and rendered him a writer of a very inferior class.

If society may thus be considered as a school for letters, it is probable that its lessons are varied in every separate state, and in every age. For a certain period, the severe applications of the Roman people to policy and war suppressed the literary arts, and appear to have stifled the genius even of the historian and the poet. The institutions of Sparta gave a professed contempt for whatever was not connected with the practical virtues of a vigorous and resolute spirit: The charms of imagination, and the parade of language, were by this people classed

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with the arts of the cook and the perfumer: Their ſongs in praiſe of fortitude are mentioned by ſome writers; and collections of their witty ſayings and repartees are ſtill preſerved: They indicate the virtues and the abilities of an active people, not their proficiency in ſcience or literary taſte. Poſſeſſed of what was eſſential to happineſs in the virtues of the heart, they had a diſcernment of its value, unimbarraſſed by the numberleſs objects on which mankind in general are ſo much at a loſs to adjuſt their eſteem: Fixed in their own apprehenſion, they turned a ſharp edge on the follies of mankind. "When will you begin to practiſe it?" was the queſtion of a Spartan to a perſon who, in an advanced age of life, was ſtill occupied with queſtions on the nature of virtue.

While this people confined their ſtudies to one queſtion. How to improve and to preſerve the courage and the diſintereſted affections of the human heart? their rivals the Athenians gave a ſcope to refinement on every object of reflection or paſſion. By the rewards, either of profit or of reputation, which they beſtowed on every effort of ingenuity employed in miniſtering to the pleaſure, the decoration, or the conveniency of life; by the variety of conditions in which their citizens were placed; by their inequalities of fortune, and their ſeveral purſuits in war, politics, commerce, and lucrative arts, they awakened whatever was either good or bad in the natural diſpoſitions of men. Every road

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to eminence was opened: Eloquence, fortitude, military ſkill, envy, detraction, faction, and treaſon, even the muſe herſelf, was courted to beſtow importance among a buſy, acute, and turbulent people.

From this example, we may ſafely conclude, that although buſineſs is ſometimes a rival to ſtudy, retirement and leiſure are not the principal requiſites to the improvement, perhaps not even to the exerciſe of literary talents. The moſt ſtriking exertions of imagination and ſentiment have a reference to mankind: They are excited by the preſence and intercourſe of men: They have moſt vigour when actuated in the mind by the operation of its principal ſprings, by the emulations, the friendſhips, and the oppoſitions which ſubſiſt among a forward and aſpiring people. Amidſt the great occaſions which put a free, and even a licentious ſociety in motion, its members become capable of every exertion; and the ſame ſcenes which gave employment to Themiſtocles and Thraſybulus, inſpired, by contagion, the genius of Sophocles and Plato. The petulant and the ingenious find an equal ſcope to their talents; and literary monuments become the repoſitories of envy and folly, as well as of wiſdom and virtue.

Greece, divided into many little ſtates, and agitated, beyond any ſpot on the globe, by domeſtic contentions and foreign wars, ſet the example

in every ſpecies of literature. The fire was communicated to Rome; not when the ſtate ceaſed to be warlike, and had diſcontinued her political agitations, but when ſhe mixed the love of refinement and of pleaſure with her national purſuits, and indulged an inclination to ſtudy in the midſt of ferments, occaſioned by the wars and pretenſions of oppoſite factions. It was revived in modern Europe among the turbulent ſtates of Italy, and ſpread to the North, together with the ſpirit which ſhook the fabric of the Gothic policy: It roſe while men were divided into parties, under civil or religious denominations, and when they were at variance on ſubjects held the moſt important and ſacred.

We may be ſatisfied, from the example of many ages, that liberal endowments beſtowed on learned ſocieties, and the leiſure with which they were furniſhed for ſtudy, are not the likelieſt means to excite the exertions of genius: Even ſcience itſelf, the ſuppoſed offspring of leiſure, pined in the ſhade of monaſtic retirement. Men at a diſtance from the objects of uſeful knowledge, untouched by the motives that animate an active and a vigorous mind, could produce only the jargon of a technical language, and accumulate the impertinence of academical forms.

To ſpeak or to write juſtly from an obſervation of nature, it is neceſſary to have felt the ſentiments of nature. He who is penetrating and ardent

ardent in the conduct of life, will probably exert a proportional force and ingenuity in the exercise of his literary talents: and although writing may become a trade, and require all the application and study which are bestowed on any other calling; yet the principal requisites in this calling are, the spirit and sensibility of a vigorous mind.

In one period, the school may take its light and direction from active life; in another, it is true, the remains of an active spirit are greatly supported by literary monuments, and by the history of transactions that preserve the examples and the experience of former and of better times. But in whatever manner men are formed for great efforts of elocution or conduct, it appears the most glaring of all deceptions, to look for the accomplishments of a human character in the mere attainments of speculation, whilst we neglect the qualities of fortitude and public affection, which are so necessary to render our knowledge an article of happiness or of use.

PART

PART FOURTH.

Of Consequences that reſult from the Advancement of Civil and Commercial Arts.

SECTION I.

Of the Separation of Arts and Profeſſions.

IT is evident, that, however urged by a ſenſe of neceſſity, and a deſire of convenience, or favoured by any advantages of ſituation and policy, a people can make no great progreſs in cultivating the arts of life, until they have ſeparated, and committed to different perſons, the ſeveral taſks, which require a peculiar ſkill and attention. The ſavage, or the barbarian, who muſt build and plant, and fabricate for himſelf, prefers, in the interval of great alarms and fatigues, the enjoyments of ſloth to the improvement of his fortune: he is, perhaps, by the diverſity of his wants, diſcouraged from induſtry; or, by his divided attention, prevented

vented from acquiring ſkill in the management of any particular ſubject.

The enjoyment of peace, however, and the proſpect of being able to exchange one commodity for another, turns, by degrees, the hunter and the warrior into a tradeſman and a merchant. The accidents which diſtribute the means of ſubſiſtence unequally, inclination, and favourable opportunities, aſſign the different occupations of men; and a ſenſe of utility leads them, without end, to ſubdivide their profeſſions.

The artiſt finds, that the more he can confine his attention to a particular part of any work, his productions are the more perfect, and grow under his hands in the greater quantities. Every undertaker in manufacture finds, that the more he can ſubdivide the taſks of his workmen, and the more hands he can employ on ſeparate articles, the more are his expences diminiſhed, and his profits increaſed. The conſumer too requires, in every kind of commodity, a workmanſhip more perfect than hands employed on a variety of ſubjects can produce; and the progreſs of commerce is but a continued ſubdiviſion of the mechanical arts.

Every craft may engroſs the whole of a man's attention, and has a myſtery which muſt be ſtudied or learned by a regular apprenticeſhip. Nations of tradeſmen come to conſiſt of members, who, beyond

beyond their own particular trade, are ignorant of all human affairs, and who may contribute to the preservation and enlargement of their commonwealth, without making its interest an object of their regard or attention. Every individual is distinguished by his calling, and has a place to which he is fitted. The savage, who knows no distinction but that of his merit, of his sex, or of his species, and to whom his community is the sovereign object of affection, is astonished to find, that in a scene of this nature, his being a man does not qualify him for any station whatever: he flies to the woods with amazement, distaste, and aversion.

By the separation of arts and professions, the sources of wealth are laid open; every species of material is wrought up to the greatest perfection, and every commodity is produced in the greatest abundance. The state may estimate its profits and its revenues by the number of its people. It may procure, by its treasure, that national consideration and power, which the savage maintains at the expence of his blood.

The advantage gained in the inferior branches of manufacture by the separation of their parts, seem to be equalled by those which arise from a similar device in the higher departments of policy and war. The soldier is relieved from every care but that of his service; statesmen divide the business of civil government into shares; and the ser-

vants of the public, in every office, without being skilful in the affairs of state, may succeed, by observing forms which are already established on the experience of others. They are made, like the parts of an engine, to concur to a purpose, without any concert of their own: and, equally blind with the trader to any general combination, they unite with him, in furnishing to the state its resources, its conduct, and its force.

The artifices of the beaver, the ant, and the bee, are ascribed to the wisdom of nature. Those of polished nations are ascribed to themselves, and are supposed to indicate a capacity superior to that of rude minds. But the establishments of men, like those of every animal, are suggested by nature, and are the result of instinct, directed by the variety of situations in which mankind are placed. Those establishments arose from successive improvements that were made, without any sense of their general effect; and they bring human affairs to a state of complication, which the greatest reach of capacity with which human nature was ever adorned, could not have projected; nor even when the whole is carried into execution, can it be comprehended in its full extent.

Who could anticipate, or even enumerate, the separate occupations and professions by which the members of any commercial state are distinguished; the variety of devices which are practised in sepa-

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rate cells, and which the artiſt, attentive to his own affair, has invented, to abridge or to facilitate his ſeparate taſk? In coming to this mighty end, every generation, compared to its predeceſſors, may have appeared to be ingenious; compared to its followers, may have appeared to be dull: And human ingenuity, whatever heights it may have gained in a ſucceſſion of ages, continues to move with an equal pace, and to creep in making the laſt as well as the firſt ſtep of commercial or civil improvement.

It may even be doubted, whether the meaſure of national capacity increaſes with the advancement of arts. Many mechanical arts, indeed, require no capacity; they ſucceed beſt under a total ſuppreſſion of ſentiment and reaſon; and ignorance is the mother of induſtry as well as of ſuperſtition. Reflection and fancy are ſubject to err; but a habit of moving the hand, or the foot, is independent of either. Manufactures, accordingly, proſper moſt, where the mind is leaſt conſulted, and where the workſhop may, without any great effort of imagination, be conſidered as an engine, the parts of which are men.

The foreſt has been felled by the ſavage without the uſe of the axe, and weights have been raiſed without the aid of the mechanical powers. The merit of the inventor, in every branch, probably deſerves a preference to that of the performer; and he who invented a tool, or could work without its

assistance, deserved the praise of ingenuity in a much higher degree than the mere artist, who, by its assistance, produces a superior work.

But if many parts in the practice of every art, and in the detail of every department, require no abilities, or actually tend to contract and to limit the views of the mind, there are others which lead to general reflections, and to enlargement of thought. Even in manufacture, the genius of the master, perhaps, is cultivated, while that of the inferior workman lyes waste. The statesman may have a wide comprehension of human affairs, while the tools he employs are ignorant of the system in which they are themselves combined. The general officer may be a great proficient in the knowledge of war, while the skill of the soldier is confined to a few motions of the hand and the foot. The former may have gained what the latter has lost; and being occupied in the conduct of disciplined armies, may practise on a larger scale all the arts of preservation, of deception, and of stratagem, which the savage exerts in leading a small party, or merely in defending himself.

The practitioner of every art and profession may afford matter of general speculation to the man of science; and thinking itself, in this age of separations, may become a peculiar craft. In the bustle of civil pursuits and occupations, men appear in a variety of lights, and suggest matter of inquiry and fancy,

fancy. By which conversation is enlivened, and greatly enlarged. The productions of ingenuity are brought to the market; and men are willing to pay for whatever has a tendency to inform or amuse. By this means the idle, as well as the busy, contribute to forward the progress of arts, and bestow on polished nations that air of superior ingenuity, under which they appear to have gained the ends that were pursued by the savage in his forest, knowledge, order, and wealth.

SECT.

SECTION II.

Of the Subordination consequent to the Separation of Arts and Professions

THERE is one ground of subordination in the difference of natural talents and dispositions; a second in the unequal division of property; and a third, not less sensible, in the habits which are acquired by the practice of different arts.

SOME employments are liberal, others mechanic. They require different talents, and inspire different sentiments; and whether or not this be the cause of the preference we actually give, it is certainly reasonable to form our opinion of the rank that is due to men of certain professions and stations, from the influence of their manner of life in cultivating the powers of the mind, or in preserving the sentiments of the heart.

THERE is an elevation natural to man, by which he would be thought, in his rudest state, however urged by necessity, to rise above the consideration of mere subsistence, and the regards of interest: He would appear to act only from the heart, in its engagements of friendship or opposition; he would shew himself only upon occasions of danger or difficulty, and leave ordinary cares to the weak or the servile.

The same apprehensions, in every situation, regulate his notions of meanness or of dignity. In that of polished society, his desire to avoid the character of sordid, makes him conceal his regard for what relates merely to his preservation or his livelihood. In his estimation, the beggar, who depends upon charity; the labourer, who toils that he may eat; the mechanic, whose art requires no exertion of genius, are degraded by the object they pursue, and by the means they employ to attain it. Professions requiring more knowledge and study; proceeding on the exercise of fancy, and the love of perfection; leading to applause as well as to profit, place the artist in a superior class, and bring him nearer to that station in which men, because they are bound to no task, because they are left to follow the disposition of the mind, and to take that part in society, to which they are led by the sentiments of the heart, or by the calls of the public; are supposed to be highest.

This last was the station, which, in the distinction betwixt freemen and slaves, the citizens of every ancient republic strove to gain, and to maintain for themselves. Women, or slaves, in the earliest ages, had been set apart for the purposes of domestic care, or bodily labour; and in the progress of lucrative arts, the latter were bred to mechanical professions, and were even intrusted with merchandise for the benefit of their masters. Freemen would be understood to have no object beside those

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of politics and war. In this manner, the honours of one half of the species were sacrificed to those of the other; as stones from the same quarry are buried in the foundation, to sustain the blocks which happen to be hewn for the superior parts of the pile. In the midst of our encomiums bestowed on the Greeks and the Romans, we are, by this circumstance, made to remember, that no human institution is perfect.

In many of the Grecian states, the benefits arising to the free from this cruel distinction, were not conferred equally on all the citizens. Wealth being unequally divided, the rich alone were exempted from labour; the poor were reduced to work for their own subsistence: interest was a reigning passion in both, and the possession of slaves, like that of any other lucrative property, became an object of avarice, not an exemption from sordid attentions. The entire effects of the institution were obtained, or continued to be enjoyed for any considerable time, at Sparta alone. We feel its injustice; we suffer for the helot, under the severities and unequal treatment to which he was exposed: but when we think only of the superior order of men in this state; when we attend to that elevation and magnanimity of spirit, for which danger had no terror, interest no means to corrupt; when we consider them as friends, or as citizens, we are apt to forget, like themselves, that slaves have a title to be treated like men.

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We look for elevation of sentiment, and liberality of mind, among those orders of citizens, who, by their condition, and their fortunes, are relieved from sordid cares and attentions. This was the description of a free man at Sparta; and if the lot of a slave among the ancients was really more wretched than that of the indigent labourer and the mechanic among the moderns, it may be doubted whether the superior orders, who are in possession of consideration and honours, do not proportionally fail in the dignity which befits their condition. If the pretensions to equal justice and freedom should terminate in rendering every class equally servile and mercenary, we make a nation of helots, and have no free citizens.

In every commercial state, notwithstanding any pretension to equal rights, the exaltation of a few must depress the many. In this arrangement, we think that the extreme meanness of some classes must arise chiefly from the defect of knowledge, and of liberal education; and we refer to such classes, as to an image of what our species must have been in its rude and uncultivated state. But we forget how many circumstances, especially in populous cities, tend to corrupt the lowest orders of men. Ignorance is the least of their failings. An admiration of wealth unpossessed, becoming a principle of envy, or of servility: a habit of acting perpetually with a view to profit, and under a sense of subjection; the crimes to which they are allured, in

order

order to feed their debauch, or to gratify their avarice, are examples, not of ignorance, but of corruption and baseness. If the savage has not received our instructions, he is likewise unacquainted with our vices. He knows no superior, and cannot be servile; he knows no distinctions of fortune, and cannot be envious; he acts from his talents in the highest station which human society can offer, that of the counsellor, and the soldier of his country. Toward forming his sentiments, he knows all that the heart requires to be known; he can distinguish the friend whom he loves, and the public interest which awakens his zeal.

The principal objections to democratical or popular government, are taken from the inequalities which arise among men in the result of commercial arts. And it must be confessed, that popular assemblies, when composed of men whose dispositions are sordid, and whose ordinary applications are illiberal, however they may be intrusted with the choice of their masters and leaders, are certainly, in their own persons, unfit to command. How can he who has confined his views to his own subsistence or preservation, be intrusted with the conduct of nations? Such men, when admitted to deliberate on matters of state, bring to its councils confusion and tumult, or servility and corruption; and seldom suffer it to repose from ruinous factions, or the effect of resolutions ill formed or ill conducted.

The Athenians retained their popular government under all these defects. The mechanic was obliged, under a penalty, to appear in the public market-place, and to hear debates on the subjects of war, and of peace. He was tempted by pecuniary rewards, to attend on the trial of civil and criminal causes. But notwithstanding an exercise tending so much to cultivate their talents, the indigent came always with minds intent upon profit, or with the habits of an illiberal calling. Sunk under the sense of their personal disparity and weakness, they were ready to resign themselves entirely to the influence of some popular leader, who flattered their passions, and wrought on their fears; or, actuated by envy, they were ready to banish from the state whomsoever was respectable and eminent in the superior order of citizens: and whether from their neglect of the public at one time, or their male-administration at another, the sovereignty was every moment ready to drop from their hands.

The people, in this case, are, in fact, frequently governed by one, or a few, who know how to conduct them. Pericles possessed a species of princely authority at Athens; Crassus, Pompey and Cæsar, either jointly or successively, possessed for a considerable period the sovereign direction at Rome.

Whether in great or in small states, democracy is preserved with difficulty, under the disparities of condition, and the unequal cultivation of

the mind, which attend the variety of purſuits, and applications, that ſeparate mankind in the advanced ſtate of commercial arts. In this, however, we do but plead againſt the form of democracy, after the principle is removed; and ſee the abſurdity of pretenſions to equal influence and conſideration, after the characters of men have ceaſed to be ſimilar.

SECT.

SECTION III.

Of the Manners of Poliſhed and Commercial Nations.

MANKIND, when in their rude ſtate, have a great uniformity of manners; but when civilized, they are engaged in a variety of purſuits; they tread on a larger field, and ſeparate to a greater diſtance. If they be guided, however, by ſimilar diſpoſitions, and by like ſuggeſtions of nature, they will probably, in the end, as well as in the beginning of their progreſs, continue to agree in many particulars; and while communities admit, in their members, that diverſity of ranks and profeſſions which we have already deſcribed, as the conſequence or the foundation of commerce, they will reſemble each other in many effects of this diſtribution, and of other circumſtances in which they nearly concur.

UNDER every form of government, ſtateſmen endeavour to remove the dangers by which they are threatned from abroad, and the diſturbances which moleſt them at home. By this conduct, if ſucceſsful, they in a few ages gain an aſcendant for their country; eſtabliſh a frontier at a diſtance from its capital; they find, in the mutual deſires of tranquillity, which come to poſſeſs mankind, and in thoſe public eſtabliſhments which tend to keep the peace

peace of ſociety, a reſpite from foreign wars, and a relief from domeſtic diſorders. They learn to decide every conteſt without tumult, and to ſecure, by the authority of law, every citizen in the poſſeſſion of his perſonal rights.

In this condition, to which thriving nations aſpire, and which they in ſome meaſure attain, mankind having laid the baſis of ſafety, proceed to erect a ſuperſtructure ſuitable to their views. The conſequence is various in different ſtates; even in different orders of men of the ſame community; and the effect to every individual correſponds with his ſtation. It enables the ſtateſman and the ſoldier to ſettle the forms of their different procedure; it enables the practitioner in every profeſſion to purſue his ſeparate advantage; it affords the man of pleaſure a time for refinement, and the ſpeculative, leiſure for literary converſation or ſtudy.

In this ſcene, matters that have little reference to the active purſuits of mankind, are made ſubjects of enquiry, and the exerciſe of ſentiment and reaſon itſelf becomes a profeſſion. The ſongs of the bard, the harangues of the ſtateſman and the warrior, the tradition and the ſtory of ancient times, are conſidered as the models, or the earlieſt production, of ſo many arts, which it becomes the object of different profeſſions to copy or to improve. The works of fancy, like the ſubjects of natural hiſtory, are diſtinguiſhed into claſſes and ſpecies; the

the rules of every particular kind are distinctly collected; and the library is stored, like the warehouse, with the finished manufacture of different artists, who, with the aids of the grammarian and the critic, aspire, each in his particular way, to instruct the head, or to move the heart.

Every nation is a motley assemblage of different characters, and contains, under any political form, some examples of that variety, which the humours, tempers, and apprehensions of men, so differently employed, are likely to furnish. Every profession has its point of honour, and its system of manners; the merchant his punctuality and fair dealing; the statesman his capacity and address; the man of society, his good breeding and wit. Every station has a carriage, a dress, a ceremonial, by which it is distinguished, and by which it suppresses the national character under that of the rank, or of the individual.

This description may be applied equally to Athens and Rome, to London and Paris. The rude or the simple observer would remark the variety he saw in the dwellings and in the occupations of different men, not in the aspect of different nations. He would find, in the streets of the same city, as great a diversity, as in the territory of a separate people. He could not pierce through the cloud that was gathered before him, nor see how the tradesman, mechanic, or scholar, of one coun-

try, ſhould differ from thoſe of another. But the native of every province can diſtinguiſh the foreigner; and when he himſelf travels, is ſtruck with the aſpect of a ſtrange country, the moment he paſſes the bounds of his own. The air of the perſon, the tone of the voice, the idiom of language, and the ſtrain of converſation, whether pathetic or languid, gay or ſevere, are no longer the ſame.

Many ſuch differences may ariſe among poliſhed nations, from the effects of climate, or from ſources of faſhion, that are ſtill more hidden or unobſerved; but the principal diſtinctions on which we can reſt, are derived from the part a people are obliged to act in their national capacity; from the objects placed in their view by the ſtate; or from the conſtitution of government, which preſcribing the terms of ſociety to its ſubjects, has a great influence in forming their apprehenſions and habits.

The Roman people, deſtined to acquire wealth by conqueſt, and by the ſpoil of provinces; the Carthaginians, intent on the returns of merchandiſe, and the produce of commercial ſettlements, muſt have filled the ſtreets of their ſeveral capitals with men of a different diſpoſition and aſpect. The Roman laid hold of his ſword when he wiſhed to be great, and the ſtate found her armies prepared in the dwellings of her people. The Carthaginian retired to his counter on a ſimilar project; and,

when the state was alarmed, or had resolved on a war, lent of his profits to purchase an army abroad.

The member of a republic, and the subject of a monarchy, must differ; because they have different parts assigned to them by the forms of their country: The one destined to live with his equals, or, to contend by his personal talents and character, for pre-eminence; the other, born to a determinate station, where any pretence to equality creates a confusion, and where nought but precedence is studied. Each, when the institutions of his country are mature, may find in the laws a protection to his personal rights; but those rights themselves are differently understood, and with a different set of opinions, give rise to a different temper of mind. The republican must act in the state, to sustain his pretensions; he must join a party, in order to be safe; he must lead one, in order to be great. The subject of monarchy refers to his birth for the honour he claims; he waits on a court, to shew his importance; and holds out the ensigns of dependence and favour, to gain him esteem with the public.

If national institutions, calculated for the preservation of liberty, instead of calling upon the citizen to act for himself, and to maintain his rights, should give a security, requiring, on his part, no personal attention or effort; this seeming perfection of government might weaken the bands of society,

and,

and, upon maxims of independence, ſeparate and eſtrange the different ranks it was meant to reconcile. Neither the parties formed in republics, nor the courtly aſſemblies which meet in monarchical governments, could take place, where the ſenſe of a mutual dependence ſhould ceaſe to ſummon their members together. The reſorts for commerce might be frequented, and mere amuſement might be purſued in the croud, while the private dwelling became a retreat for reſerve, averſe to the trouble ariſing from regards and attentions, which it might be part of the political creed to believe of no conſequence, and a point of honour to hold in contempt.

This humour is not likely to grow either in republics or monarchies: It belongs more properly to a mixture of both; where the adminiſtration of juſtice may be better ſecured; where the ſubject is tempted to look for equality, but where he finds only independence in its place; and where he learns, from a ſpirit of equality, to hate the very diſtinctions to which, on account of their real importance, he pays a remarkable deference.

In either of the ſeparate forms of republic or monarchy, or in acting on the principles of either, men are obliged to court their fellow-citizens, and to employ parts and addreſs to improve their fortunes, or even to be ſafe. They find in both a ſchool

school for discernment and penetration; but in the one, are taught to overlook the merits of a private character, for the sake of abilities that have weight with the public; and in the other, to overlook great and respectable talents, for the sake of qualities engaging or pleasant in the scene of entertainment, and private society. They are obliged, in both, to adapt themselves with care to the fashion and manners of their country. They find no place for caprice or singular humours. The republican must be popular and the courtier polite. The first must think himself well placed in every company; the other must chuse his resorts, and desire to be distinguished only where the society itself is esteemed. With his inferiors, he takes an air of protection; and suffers, in his turn, the same air to be taken with himself. It did not, perhaps, require in a Spartan, who feared nothing but a failure in his duty, who loved nothing but his friend and the state, so constant a guard on himself to support his character, as it frequently does in the subject of a monarchy, to adjust his expence and his fortune to the desires of his vanity, and to appear in a rank as high as his birth, or ambition, can possibly reach.

There is no particular, in the mean time, in which we are more frequently unjust, than in applying to the individual the supposed character of his country; or more frequently misled, than in taking our notion of a people from the example of one,

one, or a few of their members. It belonged to the conſtitution of Athens, to have produced a Cleon, and a Pericles; but all the Athenians were not, therefore, like Cleon, or Pericles. Themiſtocles and Ariſtides lived in the ſame age; the one adviſed what was profitable; the other told his country what was juſt.

SECT.

SECTION IV.

The ſame Subject continued.

THE law of nature, with reſpect to nations, is the ſame that it is with reſpect to individuals: It gives to the collective body a right to preſerve themſelves; to employ, undiſturbed, the means of life; to retain the fruits of labour; to demand the obſervance of ſtipulations and contracts. In the caſe of violence, it condemns the aggreſſor, and eſtabliſhes, on the part of the injured, the right of defence, and a claim to retribution. Its applications, however, admit of diſputes, and give riſe to variety in the apprehenſion, as well as the practice of mankind.

NATIONS have agreed univerſally, in diſtinguiſhing right from wrong; in exacting the reparation of injuries by conſent or by force. They have always repoſed, in a certain degree, on the faith of treaties; but have acted as if force were the ultimate arbiter in all their diſputes, and the power to defend themſelves, the ſureſt pledge of their ſafety. Guided by theſe common apprehenſions, they have differed from one another, not merely in points of form, but in points of the greateſt importance, reſpecting the uſage of war, the effects of captivity, and the rights of conqueſt and victory.

WHEN

WHEN a number of independent communities have been frequently involved in wars, and have had their ſtated alliances and oppoſitions, they adopt cuſtoms which they make the foundation of rules, or of laws, to be obſerved, or alledged, in all their mutual tranſactions. Even in war itſelf, they would follow a ſyſtem, and plead for the obſervance of forms in their very operations for mutual deſtruction.

THE ancient ſtates of Greece and Italy derived their manners in war from the nature of their republican government; thoſe of modern Europe, from the influence of monarchy, which, by its prevalence in this part of the world, has a great effect on nations, even where it is not the form eſtabliſhed. Upon the maxims of this government, we apprehend a diſtinction between the ſtate and its members, as that between the King and the people, which renders war an operation of policy, not of popular animoſity. While we ſtrike at the public intereſt, we would ſpare the private; and we carry a reſpect and conſideration for individuals, which often ſtops the iſſues of blood in the ardour of victory, and procures to the priſoner of war a hoſpitable reception in the very city which he came to deſtroy. Theſe practices are ſo well eſtabliſhed, that ſcarcely any provocation on the part of an enemy, or any exigence of ſervice, can excuſe a treſpaſs on the ſuppoſed rules of humanity, or ſave the

the leader who commits it from becoming an object of deteftation and horror.

To this, the general practice of the Greeks and the Romans was oppofite. They endeavoured to wound the ftate by deftroying its members, by defolating its territory, and by ruining the poffeffions of its fubjects. They granted quarter only to inflave, or to bring the prifoner to a more folemn execution; and an enemy, when difarmed, was, for the moft part, either fold in the market or killed, that he might never return to ftrengthen his party. When this was the iffue of war, it was no wonder, that battles were fought with defperation, and that every fortrefs was defended to the laft extremity. The game of human life went upon a high ftake, and was played with a proportional zeal.

The term *barbarian*, in this ftate of manners, could not be employed by the Greeks or the Romans in that fenfe in which we ufe it: To characterize a people regardlefs of commercial arts; profufe of their own lives, and of thofe of others; vehement in their attachment to one fociety, and implacable in their antipathy to another. This, in a great and fhiniug part of their hiftory, was their own character, as well as that of fome other nations, whom, upon this very account, we diftinguifh by the appellations of *barbarous* or *rude*.

It

It has been obſerved, that thoſe celebrated nations are indebted, for a great part of their eſtimation, not to the matter of their hiſtory, but to the manner in which it has been delivered, and to the capacity of their hiſtorians, and other writers. Their ſtory has been told by men who knew how to draw our attention on the proceedings of the underſtanding and of the heart, more than on external effects; and who could exhibit characters to be admired and loved, in the midſt of actions which we ſhould now univerſally hate or condemn. Like Homer, the model of Grecian literature, they could make us forget the horrors of a vindictive, cruel, and remorſeleſs treatment of an enemy, in behalf of the ſtrenuous conduct, the courage, and vehement affections, with which the hero maintained the cauſe of his friend and of his country.

Our manners are ſo different, and the ſyſtem upon which we regulate our apprehenſions, in many things, ſo oppoſite, that no leſs could make us endure the practice of ancient nations. Were that practice recorded by the mere journaliſt, who retains only the detail of events, without throwing any light on the character of the actors; who, like the Tartar hiſtorian, tells us only what blood was ſpilt in the field, and how many inhabitants were maſſacred in the city; we ſhould never have diſtinguiſhed the Greeks from their barbarous neighbours, nor have thought, that the character of civility pertained

even

even to the Romans, till very late in their history, and in the decline of their empire.

It would, no doubt, be pleasant to see the remarks of such a traveller as we sometimes send abroad to inspect the manners of mankind, left, unassisted by history, to collect the character of the Greeks from the state of their country, or from their practice in war. "This country," he might say, "compared to ours, has an air of barrenness "and desolation. I saw upon the road troops of "labourers, who were employed in the fields; "but no where the habitations of the master and "the landlord. It was unsafe, I was told, to re-"side in the country; and the people of every dis-"trict crouded into towns to find a place of defence. "It is indeed impossible, that they can be more "civilized, till they have established some regular "government, and have courts of justice to hear "their complaints. At present, every town, nay, "I may say, every village, acts for itself, and the "greatest disorders prevail. I was not indeed mo-"lested; for you must know, that they call them-"selves nations, and do all their mischief under the "pretence of war.

"I do not mean to take any of the liberties of "travellers, nor to vie with the celebrated author "of the voyage to Lilliput; but cannot help en-"deavouring to communicate what I felt on hear-"ing them speak of their territory, their armies,

"their

“ their revenue, treaties, and alliances. Only
“ imagine the church-wardens and conſtables of
“ Highgate or Hampſtead turned ſtateſmen and
“ generals, and you will have a tolerable con-
“ ception of this ſingular country. I paſſed
“ through one ſtate, where the beſt houſe in the
“ capital would not lodge the meaneſt of your la-
“ bourers, and where your very beggars would not
“ chuſe to dine with the King; and yet they are
“ thought a great nation, and have no leſs than two
“ Kings. I ſaw one of them; but ſuch a poten-
“ tate! he had ſcarcely cloaths to his back; and
“ for his Majeſty's table, he was obliged to go to
“ the eating-houſe with his ſubjects. They have
“ not a ſingle farthing of money; and I was ob-
“ liged to get food at the public expence, there
“ being none to be had in the market. You will
“ imagine, that there muſt have been a ſervice of
“ plate, and great attendance, to wait on the illuſ-
“ trious ſtranger; but my fare was a meſs of ſorry
“ pottage, brought me by a naked ſlave, who left
“ me to deal with it as I thought proper: and
“ even this I was in continual danger of having
“ ſtolen from me by the children, who are as vigi-
“ lant to ſeize opportunities, and as dextrous in
“ ſnatching their food, as any ſtarved greyhound
“ you ever ſaw. The miſery of the whole people,
“ in ſhort, as well as my own, while I ſtaid their,
“ was beyond deſcription. You would think that
“ their whole attention were to torment themſelves
“ as much as they can: they are even diſpleaſed

“ with

" with one of their Kings for being well liked. " He had made a present, while I was there, of a " cow to one favourite, and of a waistcoat to an- " other*; and it was publicly said, that this me- " thod of gaining friends was robbing the public. " My landlord told me very gravely, that a man " should come under no obligation that might " weaken the love which he owes to his country; " nor form any personal attachment beyond the " mere habit of living with his friend, and of do- " ing him a kindness when he can.

" I ASKED him once, Why they did not, for their " own sakes, enable their Kings to assume a little " more state? Because, says he, we intend them " the happiness of living with men. When I " found fault with their houses, and said in parti- " cular, that I was surprised they did not build bet- " ter churches. What would you be then, says " he, if you found religion in stone walls? This " will suffice for a sample of our conversation; and " sententious as it was, you may believe I did not " stay long to profit by it.

" THE people of this place are not quite so stu- " pid. There is a pretty large square of a market- " place, and some tolerable buildings; and, I am " told, they have some barks and lighters em- " ployed in trade, which they likeways upon oc-

* Plutarch in the life of Agesilaus.

" casion, muster into a fleet, like my Lord Mayor's
" shew. But what pleases me most is, that I am
" likely to get a passage from hence, and bid fare-
" well to this wretched country. I have been at
" some pains to observe their ceremonies of reli-
" gion, and to pick up curiosities. I have copied
" some inscriptions, as you will see when you come
" to peruse my journal, and will then judge, whe-
" ther I have met with enough to compensate the
" fatigues and bad entertainment to which I have
" submitted. As for the people, you will believe,
" from the specimen I have given you, that they
" could not be very engaging company: Though
" poor and dirty, they still pretend to be proud;
" and a fellow who is not worth a groat, is above
" working for his livelihood. They come abroad
" barefooted, and without any cover to the head,
" wrapt up in the coverlets under which you
" would imagine they had slept. They throw all
" off, and appear like so many naked cannibals,
" when they go to violent sports and exercises; at
" which they highly value feats of dexterity and
" strength. Brawny limbs, and muscular arms,
" the faculty of sleeping out all nights, of fasting
" long, and of putting up with any kind of food,
" are thought genteel accomplishments. They
" have no settled government that I could learn;
" sometimes the mob, and sometimes the better
" sort, do what they please: They meet in great
" crouds in the open air, and seldom agree about
" any thing. If a fellow has presumption enough,

" and a loud voice, he can make a great figure.
" There was a tanner here, some time ago, who,
" for a while, carried every thing before him. He
" censured so loudly what others had done, and
" talked so big of what might be performed, that
" he was sent out at last to make good his words,
" and to curry the enemy instead of his leather*.
" You will imagine, perhaps, that he was pressed
" for a recruit; no;——he was sent to command
" the army. They are indeed seldom long of one
" mind, except in their readiness to harrass their
" neighbours. They go out in bodies, and rob,
" pillage, and murder where-ever they come." So far may we suppose our traveller to have written; and upon a recollection of the reputation which those nations have acquired at a distance, he might have added, perhaps, "That he could not under-
" stand how scholars, fine gentlemen, and even
" women, should combine to admire a people,
" who so little resemble themselves."

To form a judgment of the character from which they acted in the field, and in their competitions with neighbouring nations, we must observe them at home. They were bold and fearless in their civil dissensions; ready to proceed to extremities, and to carry their debates to the decision of force. Individuals stood distinguished by their personal spirit and vigour, not by the valuation of their

* Thucydides, lib. 4.——Aristophanes.

estates,

estates, or the rank of their birth. They had a personal elevation founded on the sense of equality, not of precedence. The general of one campaign was, during the next, a private soldier, and served in the ranks. They were solicitous to acquire bodily strength; because, in the use of their weapons, battles were a trial of the soldier's strength, as well as of the leader's conduct. The remains of their statuary shews a manly grace, an air of simplicity and ease, which being frequent in nature, were familiar to the artist. The mind, perhaps, borrowed a confidence and force, from the vigour and address of the body; their eloquence and style bore a resemblance to the carriage of the person. The understanding was chiefly cultivated in the practice of affairs. The most respectable personages were obliged to mix with the croud, and derived their degree of ascendency only from their conduct, their eloquence, and personal vigour. They had no forms of expression, to mark a ceremonious and guarded respect. Invective proceeded to railing, and the grossest terms were often employed by the most admired and accomplished orators. Quarrelling had no rules but the immediate dictates of passion, which ended in words of reproach, in violence, and blows. They fortunately went always unarmed; and to wear a sword in times of peace, was among them the mark of a barbarian. When they took arms in the divisions of faction, the prevailing party supported itself by expelling their opponents, by proscriptions, and bloodshed. The

usurper

usurper endeavoured to maintain his station by the most violent and prompt executions. He was opposed, in his turn, by conspiracies and assassinations, in which the most respectable citizens were ready to use the dagger.

Such was the character of their spirit, in its occasional ferments at home; and it burst commonly with a suitable violence and force, against their foreign rivals and enemies. The amiable plea of humanity was little regarded by them in the operations of war. Cities were razed, or inslaved; the captive sold, mutilated, or condemned to die.

When viewed on this side, the ancient nations have but a sorry plea for esteem with the inhabitants of modern Europe, who profess to carry the civilities of peace into the practice of war; and who value the praise of indiscriminate lenity at a higher rate than even that of military prowess, or the love of their country. And yet they have, in other respects, merited and obtained our praise. Their ardent attachment to their country; their contempt of suffering, and of death, in its cause; their manly apprehensions of personal independence, which rendered every individual, even under tottering establishments, and imperfect laws, the guardian of freedom to his fellow-citizens; their activity of mind; in short, their penetration, the ability of their conduct, and force of their spirit, have gained them the first rank among nations.

If their animofities were great, their affections were proportionate: they, perhaps, loved, where we only pity; and were ftern and inexorable, where we are not merciful, but only irrefolute. After all, the merit of a man is determined by his candour and generofity to his affociates, by his zeal for national objects, and by his vigour in maintaining political rights; not by moderation alone, which proceeds frequently from indifference to national and public intereft, and which ferves to relax the nerves on which the force of a private as well as a public character depends.

When under the Macedonian and the Roman monarchies, a nation came to be confidered as the eftate of a prince, and the inhabitants of a province to be regarded as a lucrative property, the poffeffion of territory, not the deftruction of its people, became the object of conqueft. The pacific citizen had little concern in the quarrels of fovereigns; the violence of the foldier was reftrained by difcipline. He fought, becaufe he was taught to carry arms, and to obey: he fometimes fhed unneceffary blood in the ardour of victory; but, except in the cafe of civil wars, had no paffions to excite his animofity beyond the field and the day of battle. Leaders judged of the objects of an enterprife, and they arrefted the fword when thefe were obtained.

In the modern nations of Europe, where extent of territory admits of a diftinction between the ftate

and its subjects, we are accustomed to think of the individual with compassion, seldom of the public with zeal. We have improved on the laws of war, and on the lenitives which have been devised to soften its rigours; we have mingled politeness with the use of the sword; we have learned to make war under the stipulations of treaties and cartels, and trust to the faith of an enemy whose ruin we meditate. Glory is more successfully obtained by saving and protecting, than by destroying the vanquished: and the most amiable of all objects is, in appearance, attained; the employing of force, only for the obtaining of justice, and for the preservation of national rights.

This is, perhaps, the principal characteristic, on which, among modern nations, we bestow the epithets of *civilized* or of *polished*. But we have seen, that it did not accompany the progress of arts among the Greeks, nor keep pace with the advancement of policy, literature, and philosophy. It did not await the returns of learning and politeness among the moderns; it was found in early period of our history, and distinguished, perhaps, more than at present, the manners of the ages otherwise rude and undisciplined. A King of France, prisoner in the hands of his enemies, was treated, about four hundred years ago, with as much distinction and courtesy, as a crowned head, in the like circumstances, could possibly expect in this age of politeness *.

* Hume's History of England.

The

The Prince of Conde, defeated and taken in the battle of Dreux, ſlept at night in the ſame bed with his enemy the Duke of Guiſe *.

If the moral of popular traditions, and the taſte of fabulous legends, which are the productions or entertainment of particular ages, are likewiſe ſure indications of their notions and characters, we may preſume, that the foundation of what is now held to be the law of war, and of nations, was laid in the manners of Europe, together with the ſentiments which are expreſſed in the tales of chivalry, and of gallantry. Our ſyſtem of war differs not more from that of the Greeks, than the favourite characters of our early romance differed from thoſe of the Iliad, and of every ancient poem. The hero of the Greek fable, endued with ſuperior force, courage, and addreſs, takes every advantage of an enemy, to kill with ſafety to himſelf; and actuated by a deſire of ſpoil, or by a principle of revenge, is never ſtayed in his progreſs by interruptions of remorſe or compaſſion. Homer, who, of all poets, knew beſt how to exhibit the emotions of a vehement affection, ſeldom attempts to excite commiſeration. Hector falls unpitied, and his body is inſulted by every Greek.

Our modern fable, or romance, on the contrary, generally couples an object of pity, weak, oppreſſed, and defenceleſs, with an object of admi-

* Davila.

ration, brave, generous, and victorious; or sends the hero abroad in search of mere danger, and of occasions to prove his valour. Charged with the maxims of a refined courtesy, to be observed even towards an enemy; and of a scrupulous honour, which will not suffer him to take any advantages by artifice or surprise; indifferent to spoil, he contends only for renown, and employs his valour to rescue the distressed, and to protect the innocent. If victorious, he is made to rise above nature as much in his generosity and gentleness, as in his military prowess and valour.

It may be difficult, upon stating this contrast between the system of ancient and modern fable, to assign, among nations equally rude, equally addicted to war, and equally fond of military glory, the origin of apprehensions on the point of honour, so different, and so opposite. The hero of Greek poetry proceeds on the maxims of animosity and hostile passion. His maxims in war are like those which prevail in the woods of America. They require him to be brave, but they allow him to practise against his enemy every sort of deception. The hero of modern romance professes a contempt of stratagem, as well as of danger, and unites in the same person, characters and dispositions seemingly opposite; ferocity with gentleness, and the love of blood with sentiments of tenderness and pity.

The ſyſtem of chivalry, when completely formed, proceeded on a marvellous reſpect and veneration to the fair ſex, on forms of combat eſtabliſhed, and on a ſuppoſed junction of the heroic and ſanctified character. The formalities of the duel, and a kind of judicial challenge, were known among the ancient Celtic nations of Europe *. The Germans, even in their native foreſts, paid a kind of devotion to the female ſex. The Chriſtian religion injoined meekneſs and compaſſion to barbarous ages. Theſe different principles combined together, may have ſerved as the foundation of a ſyſtem, in which courage was directed by religion and love, and the warlike and gentle were united together. When the characters of the hero and the ſaint were mixed, the mild ſpirit of Chriſtianity, though often turned into venom by the bigotry of oppoſite parties, though it could not always ſubdue the ferocity of the warrior, nor ſuppreſs the admiration of courage and force, may have confirmed the apprehenſions of men in what was to be held meritorious and ſplendid in the conduct of their quarrels.

In the early and traditionary hiſtory of the Greeks and the Romans, rapes were aſſigned as the moſt frequent occaſions of war; and the ſexes were, no doubt, at all times, equally important to each other. The enthuſiaſm of love is moſt powerful in the neighbourhood of Aſia and Africa; and beauty, as a poſſeſſion, was probably more valued by the

* Liv. lib. 28. c. 21.

countrymen of Homer, than it was by those of Amadis de Gaul, or by the authors of modern gallantry. "What wonder," says the old Priam, when Helen appeared, "that nations should contend for the possession of so much beauty?" This beauty, indeed, was possessed by different lovers; a subject on which the modern hero had many refinements, and seemed to soar in the clouds. He adored at a respectful distance, and employed his valour to captivate the admiration, not to gain the possession of his mistress. A cold and unconquerable chastity was set up, as an idol to be worshipped, in the toils, the sufferings, and the combats of the hero and the lover.

The feudal establishments, by the high rank to which they elevated certain families, no doubt, greatly favoured this romantic system. Not only the lustre of a noble descent, but the stately castle beset with battlements and towers, served to inflame the imagination, and to create a veneration for the daughter and the sister of gallant chiefs, whose point of honour it was to be inaccessible and chaste, and who could perceive no merit but that of the high-minded and the brave, nor be approached in any other accents than those of gentleness and respect.

What was originally singular in these apprehensions, was, by the writer of romance, turned to extravagance; and under the title of chivalry was offered as a model of conduct, even in common affairs:

affairs: The fortunes of nations were directed by gallantry; and human life, on its greatest occasions, became a ſcene of affectation and folly. Warriors went forth to realize the legends they had ſtudied; princes and leaders of armies dedicated their moſt ſerious exploits to a real or to a fancied miſtreſs.

But whatever was the origin of notions, often ſo lofty and ſo ridiculous, we cannot doubt of their laſting effects on our manners. The point of honour, the prevalence of gallantry in our converſations, and on our theatres, many of the opinions which the vulgar apply even to the conduct of war; their notion, that the leader of an army being offered battle upon equal terms, is diſhonoured by declining it, are undoubtedly remains of this antiquated ſyſtem: And chivalry, uniting with the genius of our policy, has probably ſuggeſted thoſe peculiarities in the law of nations, by which modern ſtates are diſtinguiſhed from the ancient. And if our rule in meaſuring degrees of politeneſs and civilization is to be taken from hence, or from the advancement of commercial arts, we ſhall be found to have greatly excelled any of the celebrated nations of antiquity.

PART

PART FIFTH.

OF THE DECLINE OF NATIONS.

SECTION I.

Of supposed National Eminence, and of the Vicissitudes of Human Affairs.

NO nation is so unfortunate as to think itself inferior to the rest of mankind: Few are even willing to put up with the claim to equality. The greater part having chosen themselves, as at once, the judges and the models of what is excellent in their kind, are first in their own opinion, and give to others consideration or eminence, so far only as they approach to their own condition. One nation is vain of the personal character, or of the learning of a few of its members; another of its policy, its wealth, its tradesmen, its gardens, and its buildings; and they who have nothing to boast, are

are vain, because they are ignorant. The Russians, before the reign of Peter the Great, thought themselves possessed of every national honour, and held the *Nemei*, or *dumb nations*, (the name which they bestowed on their western neighbours of Europe,) in a proportional degree of contempt *. The map of the world, in China, was a square plate, the greater part of which was occupied by the provinces of this great empire, leaving on its skirts a few obscure corners, into which the wretched remainder of mankind were supposed to be driven. "If you "have not the use of our letters, nor the know-"ledge of our books," said the learned Chinese to the European missionary, "what literature, or "what science can you have†?"

The term *polished*, if we may judge from its etymology, originally referred to the state of nations in respect to their laws and government; and men civilized were men practised in the duty of citizens. In its later applications, it refers no less to the proficiency of nations in the liberal and mechanical arts, in literature, and in commerce, and men civilized are scholars, men of fashion and traders. But whatever may be its application, it appears, that if there were a name still more respectable than this, every nation, even the most barbarous, or the most corrupted, would assume it; and bestow its reverse where they conceived a dislike, or apprehended a difference. The names of *alien* or *fo-*

* Strahlenberg.

† Gemelli Carceri.

reigner,

reigner, are ſeldom pronounced without ſome degree of intended reproach. That of *barbarian*, in uſe with one arrogant people, and that of *gentil*, with another, only ſerved to diſtinguiſh the ſtranger, whoſe language and pedigree differed from theirs.

Even where we pretend to found our opinions on reaſon, and to juſtify our preference of one nation to another, we frequently beſtow our eſteem on circumſtances which do not relate to national character, and which have little tendency to promote the welfare of mankind. Conqueſt, or great extent of territory, however peopled, and great wealth, however diſtributed or employed, are titles upon which we indulge our own, and the vanity of other nations, as we do that of private men on the ſcore of their fortunes and honours. We even ſometimes contend, whoſe capital is the moſt overgrown; whoſe king has the moſt abſolute powers; and at whoſe court the bread of the ſubject is conſumed in the moſt ſenſeleſs riot. Theſe indeed are the notions of vulgar minds; but it is impoſſible to determine, how far the notions of vulgar minds may lead mankind.

There have certainly been very few examples of ſtates, who have, by arts or policy, improved the original diſpoſitions of human nature, or endeavoured, by wiſe and effectual precautions, to prevent its corruption. Affection, and force of mind, which

which are the band and the ſtrength of communities, were the inſpiration of God, and original atributes in the nature of man. The wiſeſt policy of nations, except in a very few inſtances, has tended, we may ſuſpect, rather to maintain the peace of ſociety, and to repreſs the external effects of bad paſſions, than to ſtrengthen the diſpoſition of the heart itſelf to juſtice and goodneſs. It has tended, by introducing a variety of arts, to exerciſe the ingenuity of men, and by engaging them in a variety of purſuits, inquiries, and ſtudies, to inform, but frequently to corrupt the mind. It has tended to furniſh matter of diſtinction and vanity; and by incumbring the individual with new ſubjects of perſonal care, to ſubſtitute the anxiety he entertains for a ſeparate fortune, inſtead of the confidence and the affection with which he ſhould unite with his fellow-creatures, for their joint preſervation.

WHETHER this ſuſpicion be juſt or no, we are come to point at circumſtances tending to verify, or to diſprove it: and if to underſtand the real felicity of nations be of importance, it is certainly ſo likewiſe, to know what are thoſe weakneſſes, and thoſe vices, by which men not only mar this felicity, but in one age forfeit all the external advantages they had gained in a former.

THE wealth, the aggrandizement and power of nations, are commonly the effects of virtue; the loſs

loss of these advantages, is often a consequence of vice. Were we to suppose men to have succeeded in the discovery and application of every art by which states are preserved, and governed; to have attained, by efforts of wisdom and magnanimity, the admired establishments and advantanges of a civilized and flourishing people; the subsequent part of their history, containing, according to vulgar apprehension, a full display of those fruits in maturity, of which they had till then carried only the blossom, and the first formation, should, still more than the former, merit our attention, and excite our admiration.

The event, however, has not corresponded to this expectation. The virtues of men have shone most during their struggles, not after the attainment of their ends. Those ends themselves, though attained by virtue, are frequently the causes of corruption and vice. Mankind, in aspiring to national felicity, have substituted arts which increase their riches, instead of those which improve their nature. They have entertained admiration of themselves, under the titles of *civilized* and of *polished*, where they should have been affected with shame; and even where they have for a while acted on maxims tending to raise, to invigorate, and to preserve the national character, they have, sooner or later, been diverted from their object, and fallen a prey to misfortune, or to the neglects which prosperity itself had encouraged.

War, which furnishes mankind with a principal occupation of their restless spirit, serves, by the variety of its events, to diversify their fortunes. While it opens to one tribe or society, the way to eminence, and leads to dominion, it brings another to subjection, and closes the scene of their national efforts. The celebrated rivalship of Carthage and Rome was in both parties, the natural exercise of an ambitious spirit, impatient of opposition, or even of equality. The conduct and the fortune of leaders, held the balance for some time in suspence; but to whichever side it had inclined, a great nation was to fall; a seat of empire, and of policy, was to be removed from its place; and it was then to be determined, whether the Syriac or the Latin should contain the erudition that was, in future ages, to occupy the studies of the learned.

States have been thus conquered from abroad, before they gave any signs of internal decay, even in the midst of prosperity, and in the period of their greatest ardour for national objects. Athens, in the height of her ambition, and of her glory, received a fatal wound, in striving to extend their maritime power beyond the Grecian seas. And nations of every description, formidable by their rude ferocity, respected for their discipline and military experience, when advancing, as well as when declining, in their strength, fell a prey by turns, to the ambition and arrogant spirit of the Romans. Such examples may excite and alarm the jealousy and caution of states;

fcurity is neceffary and unavoidable. The images of youth, and of old age, are applied to nations; and communities, like fingle men, are fuppofed to have a period of life, and a length of thread, which is fpun by the fates in one part uniform and ftrong, in another weakened and fhattered by ufe; to be cut, when the deftined æra is come, and to make way for a renewal of the emblem in the cafe of thofe who arife in fucceffion. Carthage, being fo much older than Rome, had felt her decay, fays Polybius, fo much the fooner: and the furvivor too, he forefaw, carried in her bofom the feeds of mortality.

The image indeed is appofite, and the hiftory of mankind renders the application familiar. But it muft be obvious, that the cafe of nations and that of individuals, are very different. The human frame has a general courfe: It has in every individual, a frail contexture, and limited duration; it is worn by exercife, and exhaufted by a repetition of its functions: But in a fociety, whofe conftituent members are renewed in every generation, where the race feems to enjoy perpetual youth, and accumulating advantages, we cannot, by any parity of reafon, expect to find imbecilities connected with mere age and length of days.

The fubject is not new, and reflections will croud upon every reader. The notions, in the mean time, which we entertain, even in fpeculation, upon a fubject fo important, cannot be entirely fruitlefs

fruitless to mankind; and however little the labours of the speculative may influence the conduct of men, one of the most pardonable errors a writer can commit, is to believe that he is about to do a great deal of good. But, leaving the care of effects to others, we proceed to consider the grounds of inconstancy among mankind, the sources of internal decay, and the ruinous corruptions to which nations are liable, in the supposed condition of accomplished civility.

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states; the presence of similar dangers may exercise the talents of politicians and statesmen; but mere reverses of fortune are the common materials of history, and must long since have ceased to create our surprise.

Did we find, that nations advancing from small beginnings, and arrived at the possession of arts which lead to dominion, became secure of their advantages, in proportion, as they were qualified to gain them; that they proceeded in a course of uninterrupted felicity, till they were broke by external calamities; and that they retained their force, till a more fortunate or vigorous power arose to depress them; the subject in speculation could not be attended with many difficulties, nor give rise to many reflections. But when we observe among nations a kind of spontaneous return to obscurity and weakness; when, in spite of perpetual admonitions of the danger they run, they suffer themselves to be subdued, in one period, by powers which could not have entered into competition with them in a former, and by forces which they had often baffled and despised; the subject becomes more curious, and its explanation more difficult.

The fact itself is known in a variety of different examples. The empire of Asia was, more than once, transferred from the greater to the inferior power. The states of Greece, once so warlike, felt a relaxation of their vigour, and yielded the ascendent

dent they had disputed with the monarchs of the east, to the forces of an obscure principality, become formidable in a few years, and raised to eminence under the conduct of a single man. The Roman empire, which stood alone for ages; which had brought every rival under subjection, and saw no power from whom a competition could be feared, sunk at last before an artless and contemptible enemy. Abandoned to inroad, to pillage, and at last to conquest, on her frontier, she decayed in all her extremities, and shrunk on every side. Her territory was dismembered, and whole provinces gave way, like branches fallen down with age, not violently torn by superior force. The spirit with which Marius had baffled and repelled the attacks of barbarians in a former age, the civil and military force with which the consul and his legions had extended this empire, were now no more. The Roman greatness doomed to sink as it rose, by slow degrees, was impaired in every encounter. It was reduced to its original dimensions, within the compass of a single city; and depending for its preservation on the fortune of a siege, it was extinguished at a blow; and the brand, which had filled the world with its flames, sunk like a taper in the socket.

Such appearances have given rise to a general apprehension, that the progress of societies to what we call the heights of national greatness, is not more natural than their return to weakness and ob-

SECTION II.

Of the Temporary Efforts and Relaxations of the National Spirit.

FROM what we have already obſerved on the general characteriſtics of human nature, it has appeared that man is not made for repoſe. In him, every amiable and reſpectable quality is an active power, and every ſubject of commendation an effort. If his errors and his crimes are the movements of an active being, his virtues and his happineſs conſiſt likeways in the employment of his mind; and all the luſtre which he caſts around him, to captivate or engage the attention of his fellow-creatures, like the flame of a meteor, ſhines only while his motion continues: The moments of reſt and obſcurity are the ſame. We know, that the taſks aſſigned him frequently may exceed, as well as come ſhort of his powers; that he may be agitated too much, as well as too little; but cannot aſcertain a preciſe medium between the ſituations in which he would be harraſſed, and thoſe in which he would fall into languor. We know that he may be employed on a great variety of ſubjects, which occupy different paſſions; and that, in conſequence of habit, he becomes reconciled to very different ſcenes. All we can determine in general is, that whatever be the ſubjects with which he is engaged, the frame of his nature requires

requires him to be occupied, and his happineſs requires him to be juſt.

We are now to inquire, why nations ceaſe to be eminent; and why ſocieties which have drawn the attention of mankind by great examples of magnanimity, conduct, and national ſucceſs, ſhould ſink from the height of their honours, and yield, in one age, the palm which they had won in a former. Many reaſons will probably occur. One may be taken from the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of mankind, who become tired of their purſuits and exertions, even while the occaſions that gave riſe to thoſe purſuits, in ſome meaſure continue: Another, from the change of ſituations, and the removal of objects which ſerved to excite their ſpirit.

The public ſafety, and the relative intereſts of ſtates; political eſtabliſhments, the pretenſions of party, commerce, and arts, are ſubjects which engage the attention of nations. The advantages gained in ſome of theſe particulars, determine the degree of national proſperity. The ardour and vigour with which they are at any one time purſued, is the meaſure of a national ſpirit. When thoſe objects ceaſe to animate, nations may be ſaid to languiſh; when they are during any conſiderable time neglected, ſtates muſt decline, and their people degenerate.

In the moſt forward, enterpriſing, inventive, and induſtrious nations, this ſpirit is fluctuating; and

and they who continue longeſt to gain advantages, or to preſerve them, have periods of remiſſneſs, as well as of ardour. The deſire of public ſafety, is, at all times, a powerful motive of conduct; but it operates moſt, when combined with occaſional paſſions, when provocations inflame, when ſucceſſes encourage, or mortifications exaſperate.

A WHOLE people, like the individuals of whom they are compoſed, act under the influence of temporary humours, ſanguine hopes, or vehement animoſities. They are diſpoſed, at one time, to enter on national ſtruggles with vehemence; at another, to drop them from mere laſſitude and diſguſt. In their civil debates and contentions at home, they are occaſionally ardent or remiſs. Epidemical paſſions ariſe or ſubſide, on trivial, as well as important grounds. Parties are ready, at one time, to take their names, and the pretence of their oppoſitions, from mere caprice or accident; at another time, they ſuffer the moſt ſerious occaſions to paſs in ſilence. If a vein of literary genius be caſually opened, or a new ſubject of diſquiſition be ſtarted, real or pretended diſcoveries ſuddenly multiply, and every converſation is inquiſitive and animated. If a new ſource of wealth be found, or a proſpect of conqueſt be offered, the imaginations of men are inflamed, and whole quarters of the globe are ſuddenly engaged in ruinous or in ſucceſsful adventures.

COULD we recall the ſpirit that was exerted, or enter into the views that were entertained, by our

 anceſtors,

anceſtors, when they burſt, like a deluge, from their ancient ſeats, and poured into the Roman empire, we ſhould probably, after their firſt ſucceſſes, at leaſt, find a ferment in the minds of men, for which no attempt was too arduous, no difficulties inſurmountable.

The ſubſequent ages of enterpriſe in Europe, were thoſe in which the alarm of enthuſiaſm was rung, and the followers of the croſs invaded the Eaſt, to plunder a country, and to recover a ſepulchre; thoſe in which the people in different ſtates contended for freedom, and aſſaulted the fabric of civil or religious uſurpation; that in which having found means to croſs the Atlantic, and to double the Cape of Good Hope, the inhabitants of one half the world were let looſe on the other, and parties from every quarter, wading in blood, and at the expence of every crime, and of every danger, traverſed the earth in ſearch of gold.

Even the weak and the remiſs are rouſed to enterpriſe, by the contagion of ſuch remarkable ages; and ſtates which have not in their form the principles of a continued exertion, either favourable or adverſe to the welfare of mankind, may have paroxyſms of ardour, and a temporary appearance of national vigour. In the caſe of ſuch nations, indeed the returns of moderation are but a relapſe to obſcurity, and the preſumption of one age is turned to dejection in that which ſucceeds.

But

But in the case of states that are fortunate in their domestic policy, even madness itself may, in the result of violent convulsions, subside into wisdom; and a people return to their ordinary mood, cured of their follies, and wiser by experience: or, with talents improved, in conducting the very scenes which frenzy had opened, they may then appear best qualified to pursue with success the object of nations. Like the ancient republics, immediately after some alarming sedition, or like the kingdom of Great Britain, at the close of its civil wars, they retain the spirit of activity, which was recently awakened, and are equally vigorous in every pursuit, whether of policy, learning, or arts. From having appeared on the brink of ruin, they pass to the greatest prosperity.

Men engage in pursuits with degrees of ardour not proportioned to the importance of their object. When they are stated in opposition or joined in confederacy, they only wish for pretences to act. They forget in the heat of their animosities, the subject of their controversy; or they seek, in their formal reasonings concerning it, only a disguise for their passions. When the heart is inflamed, no consideration can repress its ardour; when its fervour subsides, no reasoning can excite, and no eloquence awaken, its former emotions.

The continuance of emulation among states, must depend on the degree of equality by which their

their forces are balanced; or on the incentives by which either party, or all, are urged to continue their struggles. Long intermissions of war, suffer, equally in every period of civil society, the military spirit to languish. The reduction of Athens by Lysander, struck a fatal blow at the institutions of Lycurgus; and the quiet possession of Italy, happily, perhaps, for mankind, had almost put an end to the military progress of the Romans. After some years repose, Hannibal found Italy unprepared for his onset, and the Romans in a disposition likely to drop, on the banks of the Po, that martial ambition, which being roused by the sense of a new danger, afterwards carried them to the Euphrates and the Rhine.

States even distinguished for military prowess, sometimes lay down their arms from lassitude, and are weary of fruitless contentions: but if they maintain the station of independent communities, they will have frequent occasions to recall, and to exert their vigour. Even under popular governments, men sometimes drop the consideration of their political rights, and appear at times remiss or supine; but if they have reserved the power to defend themselves, the intermission of its exercise cannot be of long duration. Political rights, when neglected, are always invaded; and alarms from this quarter must frequently come to renew the attention of parties. The love of learning, and of arts, may change its pursuits, or droop for a season;

but

but while men are possessed of freedom, and while the exercises of ingenuity are not superseded, the public may proceed, at different times, with unequal fervour; but its progress is seldom altogether discontinued, or the advantages gained in one age are seldom entirely lost to the following.

If we would find the causes of final corruption, we must examine those revolutions of state that remove, or with-hold the objects of every ingenious study or liberal pursuit; that deprive the citizen of occasions to act as the member of a public; that crush his spirit; that debase his sentiments, and disqualify his mind for affairs.

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SECTION III.

Of Relaxations in the National Spirit incident to Poliſhed Nations.

IMPROVING nations, in the courſe of their advancement, have to ſtruggle with foreign enemies, to whom they bear an extreme animoſity, and with whom, in many conflicts, they contend for their exiſtence as a people. In certain periods, too, they feel in their domeſtic policy inconveniencies and grievances, which beget an eager impatience; and they apprehend reformations and new eſtabliſhments, from which they have ſanguine hopes of national happineſs. In early ages, every art is imperfect, and ſuſceptible of many improvements. The firſt principles of every ſcience are yet ſecrets to be diſcovered, and to be ſucceſſively publiſhed with applauſe and triumph.

WE may fancy to ourſelves, that in ages of progreſs, the human race, like ſcouts gone abroad on the diſcovery of fertile lands, having the world open before them, are preſented at every ſtep with the appearance of novelty. They enter on every new ground with expectation and joy: They engage in every enterprize with the ardour of men, who believe they are going to arrive at national felicity, and permanent glory; and forget paſt diſappointments amidſt the hopes of future ſucceſs.

From

From mere ignorance, rude minds are intoxicated with every paſſion; and partial to their own condition, and to their own purſuits, they think that every ſcene is inferior to that in which they are placed. Rouſed alike by ſucceſs, and by misfortune, they are ſanguine, ardent, and precipitant; and leave to the more knowing ages which ſucceed them, monuments of imperfect ſkill, and of rude execution in every art; but they leave likeways the marks of a vigorous and ardent ſpirit, which their ſucceſſors are not always qualified to ſuſtain, or to imitate.

THIS may be admitted, perhaps, as a fair deſcription of proſperous ſocieties, at leaſt during certain periods of their progreſs. The ſpirit with which they advance may be unequal, in different ages, and may have its paroxyſms, and intermiſſions, ariſing from the inconſtancy of human paſſions, and from the caſual appearance or removal of occaſions that excite them. But does this ſpirit, which for a time continues to carry on the project of civil and commercial arts, find a natural pauſe in the termination of its own purſuits? May the buſineſs of civil ſociety be accompliſhed, and may the occaſion of farther exertion be removed? Do continued diſappointments reduce ſanguine hopes, and familiarity with objects blunt the edge of novelty? Does experience itſelf cool the ardour of the mind? May the ſociety be again compared to the individual? And may it be ſuſpected, although the vigour of a nation,

nation, like that of a natural body, does not waſte by a phyſical decay, that yet it may ſicken for want of exerciſe, and die in the cloſe of its own exertions? May ſocieties, in the completion of all their deſigns, like men in years, who diſregard the amuſements, and are inſenſible to the paſſions of youth, become cold and indifferent to objects that uſed to animate in a ruder age? And may a poliſhed community be compared to a man, who having executed his plan, built his houſe, and made his ſettlement; who having, in ſhort, exhauſted the charms of every ſubject, and waſted all his ardour, ſinks into languor and liſtleſs indifference? If ſo, we have found at leaſt another ſimile to our purpoſe. But it is probable, that here too, the reſemblance is imperfect; and the inference that would follow, like that of moſt arguments drawn from analogy, tends rather to amuſe the fancy, than to give any real information on the ſubject to which it refers.

The materials of human art are never entirely exhauſted, and the applications of induſtry are never at an end. The national ardour is not, at any particular time, proportioned to the occaſion there is for activity; nor the curioſity of the learned to the extent of ſubject that remains to be ſtudied.

The ignorant and the artleſs, to whom objects of ſcience are new, and whoſe manner of life is moſt ſimple, inſtead of being more active, and more curious, are commonly more quieſcent, and leſs inquiſitive, than thoſe who are beſt fur-

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nished with knowledge and the conveniencies of life. When we compare the particulars which occupy mankind in the beginning and in the advanced age of commercial arts, these particulars will be found greatly multiplied and enlarged in the last. The questions we have put, however, deserve to be answered; and if, in the result of commerce, we do not find the objects of human pursuit removed, or greatly diminished, we may find them at least changed; and in estimating the national spirit, we may find a negligence in one part, but ill compensated by the growing attention which is paid to another.

It is true, in general, that in all our pursuits, there is a termination of trouble, and a point of repose to which we aspire. We would remove this inconvenience, or gain that advantage that our labours may cease. When I have conquered Italy and Sicily, says Pyrrhus, I shall then enjoy my repose. This termination is proposed in our national, as well as in our personal exertions; and in spite of frequent experience to the contrary, is considered at a distance as the height of felicity. But nature has wisely, in most particulars, baffled our project; and placed no where within our reach this visionary blessing of absolute ease. The attainment of one end is but the beginning of a new pursuit; and the discovery of one art is but a prolongation of the thread by which we are conducted to further

 inquiries,

inquiries, and while we hope to escape from the labyrinth, are led to its most intricate paths.

Among the occupations that may be enumerated, as tending to exercise the invention, and to cultivate the talents of men, are the pursuits of accommodation and wealth, including all the different contrivances which serve to increase manufactures, and to perfect the mechanical arts. But it must be owned, that as the materials of commerce may continue to be accumulated without any determinate limit, so the arts which are applied to improve them, may admit of perpetual refinements. No measure of fortune, or degree of skill, is found to diminish the supposed necessities of human life; refinement and plenty foster new desires, while they furnish the means, or practise the methods, to gratify them.

In the result of commercial arts, inequalities of fortune are greatly increased, and the majority of every people are obliged by necessity, or at least strongly incited by ambition and avarice, to employ every talent they possess. After a history of some thousand years employed in manufacture and commerce, the inhabitants of China are still the most laborious and industrious of any people on earth.

Some part of this observation may be extended to the elegant and literary arts. They too have their

their materials, which cannot be exhausted, and proceed from desires which cannot be satiated. But the respect paid to literary merit is fluctuating, and matter of transient fashion. When learned productions accumulate, the acquisition of knowledge occupies the time that might be bestowed on invention. The object of mere learning is attained with moderate or inferior talents, and the growing list of pretenders diminishes the lustre of the few who are eminent. When we only mean to learn what others have taught, it is probable, that even our knowledge will be less than that of our masters. Great names continue to be repeated with admiration, after we have ceased to examine the foundations of our praise; and new pretenders are rejected, not because they fall short of their predecessors, but because they do not excel them; or because, in reality, we have, without examination, taken for granted the merit of the first, and cannot judge of either.

After libraries are furnished, and every path of ingenuity is occupied, we are, in proportion to our admiration of what is already done, prepossessed against farther attempts. We become students and admirers, instead of rivals; and substitute the knowledge of books, instead of the inquisitive or animated spirit in which they were written.

The commercial and the lucrative arts may continue to prosper, but they gain an ascendant at the

expence

expence of other purſuits. The deſire of profit ſtifles the love of perfection. Intereſt cools the imagination, and hardens the heart; and, recommending employments in proportion as they are lucrative, and certain in their gains, it drives ingenuity, and ambition itſelf, to the counter and the workſhop.

But, apart from theſe conſiderations, the ſeparation of profeſſions, while it ſeems to promiſe improvement of ſkill, and is actually the cauſe why the productions of every art become more perfect as commerce advances; yet in its termination, and ultimate effects, ſerves, in ſome meaſure, to break the bands of ſociety, to ſubſtitute mere forms and rules of art in place of ingenuity, and to withdraw individuals from the common ſcene of occupation, on which the ſentiments of the heart, and the mind, are moſt happily employed.

Under the *diſtinction* of callings, by which the members of poliſhed ſociety are ſeparated from each other, every individual is ſuppoſed to poſſeſs his ſpecies of talent, or his peculiar ſkill, in which the others are confeſſedly ignorant; and ſociety is made to conſiſt of parts, of which none is animated with the ſpirit that ought to prevail in the conduct of nations. "We ſee in the ſame perſons," ſaid Pericles, "an equal attention to private and to "public affairs; and in men who have turned to "ſeparate profeſſions, a competent knowledge of

"what

"... what relates to the community; for we alone "consider those who are inattentive to the state, as "perfectly insignificant." This encomium on the Athenians, was probably offered under an apprehension, that the contrary was likely to be charged by their enemies, or might soon take place. It happened accordingly, that the business of state, as well as of war, came to be worse administered at Athens, when these, as well as other applications, became the object of separate professions; and the history of this people abundantly shewed, that men ceased to be citizens, even to be good poets and orators, in proportion as they came to be distinguished by the profession of these, and other separate crafts.

Animals less honoured than we, have sagacity enough to procure their food, and to find the means of their solitary pleasures; but it is reserved for man to consult, to persuade, to oppose, to kindle in the society of his fellow-creatures, and to lose the sense of his personal interest or safety, in the ardour of his friendships and his oppositions.

When we are involved in any of the divisions into which mankind are separated under the denominations of a country, a tribe, or an order of men any way affected by common interests, and guided by communicating passions, the mind recognises its natural station; the sentiments of the heart, and the talents of the understanding, find their

their natural exercife. Wifdom, vigilance, fidelity, and fortitude, are the characters requifite in fuch a fcene, and the qualities which it tends to improve.

In fimple or barbarous ages, when nations are weak and befet with enemies, the love of a country, of a party, or a faction, are the fame. The public is a knot of friends, and its enemies are the reft of mankind. Death, or flavery, are the ordinary evils which they are concerned to ward off; victory and dominion, the objects to which they afpire. Under the fenfe of what they may fuffer from foreign invafions, it is one object, in every profperous fociety, to increafe its force, and to extend its limits. In proportion as this object is gained, fecurity increafes. They who poffefs the interior diftricts, remote from the frontier, are unufed to alarms from abroad. They who are placed on the extremities, remote from the feats of government, are unufed to hear of political interefts; and the public becomes an object perhaps too extenfive, for the conceptions of either. They enjoy the protection of its laws, or of its armies; and they boaft of its fplendor, and its power; but the glowing fentiments of public affection, which, in fmall ftates, mingle with the tendernefs of the parent and the lover, of the friend and the companion, merely by having their object enlarged, lofe great part of their force.

The manners of rude nations require to be reformed. Their foreign quarrels, and domeftic dif-fenfions,

sensions, are the operations of extreme and sanguinary passions. A state of greater tranquillity hath many happy effects. But if nations pursue the plan of enlargement and pacification, till their members can no longer apprehend the common ties of society, nor be engaged by affection in the cause of their country, they must err on the opposite side, and by leaving too little to agitate the spirits of men, bring on ages of languor, if not of decay.

The members of a community may, in this manner, like the inhabitants of a conquered province, be made to lose the sense of every connection, but that of kindred or neighbourhood; and have no common affairs to transact, but those of trade: Connections, indeed, or transactions, in which probity and friendship may still take place; but in which the national spirit, whose ebbs and flows we are now considering, cannot be exerted.

What we observe, however, on the tendency of enlargement to loosen the bands of political union, cannot be applied to nations who, being originally narrow, never greatly extended their limits, nor to those who, in a rude state, had already the extension of a great kingdom.

In territories of considerable extent, subject to one government, and possessed of freedom, the national union, in rude ages, is extremely imperfect. Every district forms a separate party; and the descendents

ſcendents of different families are oppoſed to each other, under the denomination of *tribes* or of *clans*; they are ſeldom brought to act with a ſteady concert; their feuds and animoſities give more frequently the appearance of ſo many nations at war, than of a people united by connections of policy. They acquire a ſpirit, however, in their private diviſions, and in the midſt of a diſorder, otherwiſe hurtful, of which the force, on many occaſions, redounds to the power of the ſtate.

WHATEVER be the national extent, civil order, and regular government, are advantages of the greateſt importance; but it does not follow, that every arrangement made to obtain theſe ends, and which may, in the making, exerciſe and cultivate the beſt qualities of men, is therefore of a nature to produce permanent effects, and to ſecure the preſervation of that national ſpirit from which it aroſe.

WE have reaſon to dread the political refinements of ordinary men, when we conſider, that repoſe, or inaction itſelf, is in a great meaſure their object; and that they would frequently model their governments, not merely to prevent injuſtice and error, but to prevent agitation and buſtle; and by the barriers they raiſe againſt the evil actions of men, would prevent them from acting at all. Every diſpute of a free people, in the opinion of ſuch politicians, amounts to diſorder, and a breach of the national peace. What heart-burnings? What delay

lay to affairs? What want of secrecy and dispatch? What defect of police? Men of superior genius sometimes seem to imagine, that the vulgar have no title to act, or to think. A great prince is pleased to ridicule the precaution by which judges in a free country are confined to the strict interpretation of law*.

We easily learn to contract our opinions of what men may, in consistence with public order, be safely permitted to do. The agitations of a republic, and the licence of its members, strike the subjects of monarchy with aversion and disgust. The freedom with which the European is left to traverse the streets and the fields, would appear to a Chinese a sure prelude to confusion and anarchy. "Can men behold their superior and not tremble? Can they converse without a precise and written ceremonial? What hopes of peace, if the streets are not barricaded at an hour? What wild disorder, if men are permitted in any thing to do what they please?"

If the precautions which men thus take against each other be necessary to repress their crimes, and do not arise from a corrupt ambition, or from cruel jealousy in their rulers, the proceeding itself must be applauded, as the best remedy of which the vices of men will admit. The viper must be held at a distance, and the tyger chained. But if

* Memoirs of Brandenburg.

a rigorous policy, applied to enſlave, not to reſtrain from crimes, has an actual tendency to corrupt the manners, and to extinguiſh the ſpirit of nations; if its ſeverities be applied to terminate the agitations of a free people, not to remedy their corruptions; if forms be often applauded as ſalutary, becauſe they tend merely to ſilence the voice of mankind, or be condemned as pernicious, becauſe they allow this voice to be heard; we may expect that many of the boaſted improvements of civil ſociety, will be mere devices to lay the political ſpirit at reſt, and will chain up the active virtues more than the reſtleſs diſorders of men.

If to any people it be the avowed object of policy, in all its internal refinements to ſecure only the perſon and the property of the ſubject, without any regard to his political character, the conſtitution indeed may be free, but its members may likewiſe become unworthy of the freedom they poſſeſs, and unfit to preſerve it. The effects of ſuch a conſtitution may be to immerſe all orders of men in their ſeparate purſuits of pleaſure, which they may on this ſuppoſition enjoy with little diſturbance; or of gain, which they may preſerve without any attention to the commonwealth.

If this be the end of political ſtruggles, the deſign, when executed, in ſecuring to the individual his eſtate, and the means of ſubſiſtence, may put an end to the exerciſe of thoſe very virtues, that

were

were required in conducting its execution. A man who, in concert with his fellow-subjects, contends with usurpation in defence of his estate or his person, may in that very struggle have found an exertion of great generosity, and of a vigorous spirit; but he who, under political establishments, supposed to be fully confirmed, betakes him, because he is safe, to the mere enjoyment of fortune, has in fact turned to a source of corruption the advantages which the virtues of the other procured. Individuals, in certain ages, derive their protection chiefly from the strength of the party to which they adhere; but in times of corruption they flatter themselves, that they may continue to derive from the public that safety which, in former ages, they must have owed to their own vigilance and spirit, to the warm attachment of their friends, and to the exercise of every talent which could render them respected, feared, or beloved. In one period, therefore, mere circumstances serve to excite the spirit, and to preserve the manners of men; in another, great wisdom and zeal for the good of mankind on the part of their leaders, are required for the same purposes.

Rome, it may be thought, did not die of a lethargy, nor perish by the remission of her political ardours at home. Her distemper appeared of a nature more violent and acute. Yet if the virtues of Cato and of Brutus found an exercise in the dying hour of the republic, the neutrality, and the cautious

cautious retirement of Atticus, found its ſecurity in the ſame tempeſtuous ſeaſon; and the great body of the people lay undiſturbed below the current of a ſtorm, by which the ſuperior ranks of men were deſtroyed. In the minds of the people, the ſenſe of a public was defaced; and even the animoſity of faction had ſubſided; they only could ſhare in the commotion, who were the ſoldiers of a legion, or the partiſans of a leader. But this ſtate fell not into obſcurity for want of eminent men. If at the time of which we ſpeak, we look only for a few names diſtinguiſhed in the hiſtory of mankind, there is no period at which the liſt was more numerous. But thoſe names became diſtinguiſhed in the conteſt for dominion, not in the exerciſe of equal rights: the people was corrupted; ſo great an empire ſtood in need of a maſter.

Republican governments, in general, are in hazard of ruin from the aſcendant of particular factions, and from the mutinous ſpirit of a populace, who being corrupted, are no longer fit to ſhare in the adminiſtration of ſtate. But under other eſtabliſhments, where liberty may be more ſucceſsfully attained if men are corrupted, the national vigour declines from the abuſe of that very ſecurity which is procured by the ſuppoſed perfection of public order.

A distribution of power and office; an execution of law, by which mutual incroachments and moleſtations are brought to an end; by which the

perſon

person and the property are, without friends, without cabal, without obligation, perfectly secured to individuals, does honour to the genius of a nation; and could not have been fully established, without those exertions of understanding and integrity, those trials of a resolute and vigorous spirit, which adorn the annals of a people, and leave to future ages a subject of just admiration and applause. But if we suppose that the end is attained, and that men no longer act, in the enjoyment of liberty, from liberal sentiments, or with a view to the preservation of public manners; if individuals think themselves secure without any attention or effort of their own; this boasted advantage may be found only to give them an opportunity of enjoying, at leisure, the conveniencies and necessaries of life; or, in the language of Cato, teach them to value their houses, their villas, their statues, and their pictures, at a higher rate than they do the republic. They may be found to grow tired in secret of a free constitution, of which they never cease to boast in their conversation, and which they always neglect in their conduct.

The dangers to liberty are not the subject of our present consideration; but they can never be greater from any cause than they are from the supposed remissness of a people, to whose personal vigour every constitution, as it owed its establishment, so must continue to owe its preservation. Nor is this blessing ever less secure than it is in the possession of men

men who think that they enjoy it in ſafety, and who therefore conſider the public only as it preſents to their avarice a number of lucrative employments; for the ſake of which they may ſacrifice thoſe very rights which render themſelves objects of management or of conſideration.

From the tendency of theſe reflections, then, it ſhould appear, that a national ſpirit is frequently tranſient, not on account of any incurable diſtemper in the nature of mankind, but on account of their voluntary neglects and corruptions. This ſpirit ſubſiſted ſolely, perhaps, in the execution of a few projects, entered into for the acquiſition of territory or wealth; it comes, like a uſeleſs weapon, to be laid aſide after its end is attained.

Ordinary eſtabliſhments terminate in a relaxation of vigour, and are ineffectual to the preſervation of ſtates; becauſe they lead mankind to rely on their arts, inſtead of their virtues; and to miſtake for an improvement of human nature, a mere acceſſion of accommodation, or of riches*. Inſtitutions that fortify the mind, inſpire courage, and promote national felicity, can never tend to national ruin.

Is it not poſſible, amidſt our admiration of arts, to find ſome place for theſe? Let ſtateſmen, who

* Adeo in quæ laboramus ſola crevimus Divitias luxuriamque. Liv. lib. vii. c. 25.

are

are intruſted with the government of nations, reply for themſelves. It is their buſineſs to ſhew, whether they climb into ſtations of eminence, merely to diſplay a paſſion for intereſt, which they had better indulge in obſcurity; and whether they have capacity to underſtand the happineſs of a people, the conduct of whoſe affairs they are ſo willing to undertake.

SECTION IV.

The ſame Subject continued.

MEN frequently, while they are engaged in what is accounted the moſt ſelfiſh of all purſuits, the improvement of fortune, then moſt neglect themſelves; and while they reaſon for their country, forget the conſiderations that moſt deſerve their attention. Numbers, riches, and the other reſources of war, are highly important: But nations conſiſt of men; and a nation conſiſting of degenerate and cowardly men, is weak; a nation conſiſting of vigorous, public-ſpirited, and reſolute men, is ſtrong. The reſources of war, where other advantages are equal, may decide a conteſt; but the reſources of war, in hands that cannot employ them, are of no avail.

VIRTUE is a neceſſary conſtituent of national ſtrength: Capacity, and a vigorous underſtanding, are no leſs neceſſary to ſuſtain the fortune of ſtates. Both are improved by diſcipline, and by the exerciſes in which men are engaged. We deſpiſe, or we pity, the lot of mankind, while they lived under uncertain eſtabliſhments, and were obliged to ſuſtain in the ſame perſon, the character of the ſenator, the ſtateſman, and the ſoldier. Commercial nations diſcover, that any one of theſe characters is ſufficient in one perſon; and that the ends of each,

when disjoined, are more easily accomplished. The first, however, were circumstances under which nations advanced and prospered; the second were those in which the spirit relaxed, and the nation went to decay.

We may, with good reason, congratulate our species on their having escaped from a state of barbarous disorder and violence, into a state of domestic peace and regular policy; when they have sheathed the dagger, and disarmed the animosities of civil contention; when the weapons with which they contend are the reasonings of the wise, and the tongue of the eloquent. But we cannot, mean time, help to regret, that they should ever proceed, in search of perfection, to place every branch of administration behind the counter, and come to employ, instead of the statesman and warrior, the mere clerk and accountant.

By carrying this system to its height, men are educated, who could copy for Cæsar his military instructions, or even execute a part of his plans; but none who could act in all the different scenes for which the leader himself must be qualified, in the state and in the field, in times of order or of tumult, in times of division or of unanimity; none who could animate the council when deliberating on domestic affairs, or when alarmed by attacks from abroad.

The policy of China is the moſt perfect model of an arrangement at which the ordinary refinements of government are aimed; and the inhabitants of that empire poſſeſs, in the higheſt degree, thoſe arts on which vulgar minds make the felicity and greatneſs of nations to depend. The ſtate has acquired, in a meaſure unequalled in the hiſtory of mankind, numbers of men, and the other reſources of war. They have done what we are very apt to admire; they have brought national affairs to the level of the meaneſt capacity; they have broke them into parts, and thrown them into ſeparate departments; they have clothed every proceeding with ſplendid ceremonies, and majeſtical forms; and where the reverence of forms cannot repreſs diſorder, a rigorous and ſevere police, armed with every ſpecies of corporal puniſhment, is applied to the purpoſe. The whip, and the cudgel, are held up to all orders of men; they are at once employed, and they are dreaded by every magiſtrate. A mandarine is whipped, for having ordered a pickpocket to receive too few or too many blows.

Every department of ſtate is made the object of a ſeparate profeſſion, and every candidate for office muſt have paſſed through a regular education; and, as in the graduations of the univerſity, muſt have obtained by his proficiency, or his ſtanding, the degree to which he aſpires. The tribunals of ſtate, of war, and of the revenue, as well as of literature, are conducted by graduates in their different

ferent ſtudies: But while learning is the great road to preferment, it terminates, in being able to read, and to write; and the great object of government conſiſts in raiſing, and in conſuming the fruits of the earth. With all theſe reſources, and this learned preparation, which is made to turn theſe reſources to uſe, the ſtate is in reality weak; has repeatedly given the example which we ſeek to explain; and among the doctors of war or of policy, among the millions who are ſet apart for the military profeſſion, can find none of its members who are fit to ſtand forth in the dangers of their country, or to form a defence againſt the repeated inroads of an enemy reputed to be artleſs and mean.

It is difficult to tell how long the decay of ſtates might be ſuſpended, by the cultivation of arts on which their real felicity and ſtrength depend; by cultivating in the higher ranks thoſe talents for the council and the field, which cannot, without great diſadvantage, be ſeparated; and in the body of a people, that zeal for their country, and that military character, which enable them to take a ſhare in defending its rights.

Times may come, when every proprietor muſt defend his own poſſeſſions, and every free people maintain their own independence. We may imagine, that againſt ſuch an extremity, an army of hired troops is a ſufficient precaution; but their own troops are the very enemy againſt which a

people

people is ſometimes obliged to fight. We may flatter ourſelves, that extremities of this ſort, in any particular caſe, are remote; but we cannot, in reaſoning on the general fortunes of mankind, avoid putting the caſe, and referring to the examples in which it has happened. It has happened in every inſtance where the poliſhed have fallen a prey to the rude, and where the pacific inhabitant has been reduced to ſubjection by military force.

If the defence and government of a people be made to depend on a few, who make the conduct of ſtate or of war their profeſſion; whether theſe be foreigners or natives; whether they be called away of a ſudden, like the Roman legion from Britain; whether they turn againſt their employers, like the army of Carthage, or be overpowered and diſperſed by a ſtroke of fortune, the multitude of a cowardly and undiſciplined people muſt, on ſuch an emergence, receive a foreign or a domeſtic enemy, as they would a plague or an earthquake, with hopeleſs amazement and terror, and by their numbers only ſwell the triumphs, and enrich the ſpoil of a conqueror.

Statesmen and leaders of armies, accuſtomed to the mere obſervance of forms, are diſconcerted by a ſuſpenſion of cuſtomary rules; and on ſlight grounds deſpair of their country. They were qualified only to go the rounds of a particular track; and when forced from their ſtations, are in reality

unable

unable to act with men. They only took part in formalities, of which they understood not the tendency; and together with the modes of procedure, even the very state itself, in their apprehension, has ceased to exist. The numbers, possessions, and resources of a great people, only serve, in their view, to constitute a scene of hopeless confusion and terror.

In rude ages, under the appellations of *a community*, *a people*, or *a nation*, was understood a number of men; and the state, while its members remained, was accounted entire. The Scythians, while they fled before Darius, mocked at his childish attempt; Athens survived the devastations of Xerxes; and Rome, in its rude state, those of the Gauls. With polished and mercantile states, the case is sometimes reversed. The nation is a territory, cultivated and improved by its owners; destroy the possession, even while the master remains, the state is undone.

That weakness and effeminacy of which polished nations are sometimes accused, has its place probably in the mind alone. The strength of animals, and that of man in particular, depends on his feeding, and the kind of labour to which he is used. Wholesome food, and hard labour, the portion of many in every polished and commercial nation, secure to the public a number of men endued

with

with bodily ſtrength, and inured to hardſhip and toil.

Even delicate living, and good accommodation, are not found to enervate the body. The armies of Europe have been obliged to make the experiment; and the children of opulent families bred in effeminacy, or nurſed with tender care, have been made to contend with the ſavage. By imitating his arts, they have learned, like him, to traverſe the foreſt; and, in every ſeaſon, to ſubſiſt in the deſert. They have, perhaps, recovered a leſſon, which it has coſt civilized nations many ages to unlearn, That the fortune of a man is entire while he remains poſſeſſed of himſelf.

It may be thought, however, that few of the celebrated nations of antiquity, whoſe fate has given riſe to ſo much reflection on the viciſſitudes of human affairs, had made any great progreſs in thoſe enervating arts we have mentioned; or made thoſe arrangements from which the danger in queſtion could be ſuppoſed to ariſe. The Greeks, in particular, at the time they received the Macedonian yoke, had certainly not carried the commercial arts to ſo great a height as is common with the moſt flouriſhing and proſperous nations of Europe. They had ſtill retained the form of independent republics; the people were generally admitted to a ſhare in the government; and not being able to hire armies, they were obliged, by neceſſity, to bear a part in

the defence of their country. By their frequent wars and domestic commotions, they were accustomed to danger, and were familiar with alarming situations: they were accordingly still accounted the best soldiers and the best statesmen of the known world. The younger Cyrus promised himself the empire of Asia by means of their aid; and after his fall, a body of ten thousand, although bereft of their leaders, baffled, in their retreat, all the military force of the Persian empire. The victor of Asia did not think himself prepared for that conquest, till he had formed an army from the subdued republics of Greece.

It is, however, true, that in the age of Philip, the military and political spirit of those nations appears to have been considerably impaired, and to have suffered, perhaps, from the variety of interests and pursuits, as well as of pleasures, with which their members came to be occupied; they even made a kind of separation between the civil and military character. Phocion, we are told by Plutarch, having observed that the leading men of his time followed different courses, that some applied themselves to civil, others to military affairs, determined rather to follow the examples of Themistocles, Aristides, and Pericles, the leaders of a former age, who were equally prepared for either.

We find in the orations of Demosthenes, a perpetual reference to this state of manners. We find him

him exhorting the Athenians, not only to declare war, but to arm themselves for the execution of their own military plans. We find that there was an order of military men, who easily passed from the service of one state to that of another; and who, when they were neglected from home, turned away to enterprises on their own account. There were not, perhaps, better warriors in any former age; but those warriors were not attached to any state; and the settled inhabitants of every city thought themselves disqualified for military service. The discipline of armies was perhaps improved; but the vigour of nations was gone to decay. When Philip, or Alexander, defeated the Grecian armies, which were chiefly composed of soldiers of fortune, they found an easy conquest with the other inhabitants; and when the latter, afterwards supported by those soldiers, invaded the Persian empire, he seems to have left little martial spirit behind him; and by removing the military men, to have taken precaution enough, in his absence, to secure his dominion over this mutinous and refractory people.

THE subdivision of arts and professions, in certain examples, tends to improve the practice of them, and to promote their ends. By having separated the arts of the clothier and the tanner, we are the better supplied with shoes and with cloth. But to separate the arts which form the citizen and the statesman, the arts of policy and war, is an attempt to dismember the human character, and to destroy

destroy those very arts we mean to improve. By this separation, we in effect deprive a free people of what is necessary to their safety; or we prepare a defence against invasions from abroad, which gives a prospect of usurpation, and threatens the establishment of military government at home.

We may be surprized to find the beginning of certain military instructions at Rome, referred to a time no earlier than that of the Cimbric war. It was then, we are told by Valerius Maximus, that Roman soldiers were made to learn from gladiators the use of a sword: And the antagonists of Pyrrhus and of Hannibal were, by the account of this writer, still in need of instruction in the first rudiments of their trade. They had already, by the order and choice of their incampments, impressed the Grecian invader with awe and respect; they had already, not by their victories, but by their national vigour and firmness, under repeated defeats, induced him to sue for peace. But the haughty Roman, perhaps, knew the advantage of order and of union, without having been broke to the inferior arts of the mercenary soldier; and had the courage to face the enemies of his country, without having practised the use of his weapon under the fear of being whipped. He could ill be persuaded, that a time might come, when refined and intelligent nations would make the art of war to consist in a few technical forms; that citizens and soldiers might come to be distinguished as much as women and men; that the ci-

tizen would become poſſeſſed of a property which he would not be able, or required, to defend; that the ſoldier would be appointed to keep for another what he would be taught to deſire, and what he alone would be enabled to ſeize and to keep for himſelf; that, in ſhort, one ſet of men were to have an intereſt in the preſervation of civil eſtabliſhments, without the power to defend them; that the other were to have this power, without either the inclination or the intereſt.

This people, however, by degrees came to put their military force on the very footing to which this deſcription alludes. Marius made a capital change in the manner of levying ſoldiers at Rome: He filled his legions with the mean and the indigent, who depended on military pay for ſubſiſtence; he created a force which reſted on mere diſcipline alone, and the ſkill of the gladiator; he taught his troops to employ their ſwords againſt the conſtitution of their country, and ſet the example of a practice which was ſoon adopted and improved by his ſucceſſors.

The Romans only meant by their armies to incroach on the freedom of other nations, while they preſerved their own. They forgot, that in aſſembling ſoldiers of fortune, and in ſuffering any leader to be maſter of a diſciplined army, they actually reſigned their political rights, and ſuffered a maſter to ariſe for the ſtate. This people, in ſhort, whoſe

ruling

ruling passion was depredation and conquest, perished by the recoil of an engine which they themselves had erected against mankind.

The boasted refinements, then, of the polished age, are not divested of danger. They open a door, perhaps, to disaster, as wide and accessible as any of those they have shut. If they build walls and ramparts, they enervate the minds of those who are placed to defend them; if they form disciplined armies, they reduce the military spirit of entire nations; and by placing the sword where they have given a distaste to civil establishments, they prepare for mankind the government of force.

It is happy for the nations of Europe, that the disparity between the soldier and the pacific citizen can never be so great as it became among the Greeks and the Romans. In the use of modern arms, the novice is made to learn, and to practise with ease, all that the veteran knows; and if to teach him were a matter of real difficulty, happy are they who are not deterred by such difficulties, and who can discover the arts which tend to fortify and preserve, not to enervate and ruin their country.

SECT.

SECTION V.

Of National Waste.

THE strength of nations consists in the wealth, the numbers, and the character of their people. The history of their progress from a state of rudeness, is, for the most part, a detail of the struggles they have maintained, and of the arts they have practised, to strengthen, or to secure themselves. Their conquests, their population, and their commerce, their civil and military arrangements, their skill in the construction of weapons, and in the methods of attack and defence; the very distribution of tasks, whether in private business or in public affairs, either tend to bestow, or promise to employ with advantage, the constituents of a national force, and the resources of war.

If we suppose, that, together with these advantages, the military character of a people remains, or is improved, it must follow, that what is gained in civilization, is a real increase of strength; and that the ruin of nations could never take its rise from themselves. Where states have stopped short in their progress, or have actually gone to decay, we may suspect, that however disposed to advance, they have found a limit, beyond which they could not proceed; or from a remission of the national spirit, and a weakness of character, were unable to

make the moſt of their reſources, and natural advantages. On this ſuppoſition, from being ſtationary, they may begin to relapſe, and by a retrograde motion, in a ſucceſſion of ages, arrive at a ſtate of greater weakneſs, than that which they quitted in the beginning of their progreſs; and with the appearance of better arts, and ſuperior conduct, expoſe themſelves to become a prey to barbarians, whom, in the attainment, or the height of their glory, they had eaſily baffled or deſpiſed.

Whatever may be the natural wealth of a people, or whatever may be the limits beyond which they cannot improve on their ſtock, it is probable, that no nation has ever reached thoſe limits, or has been able to poſtpone its misfortunes, and the effects of miſconduct, until its fund of materials, and the fertility of its ſoil, were exhauſted, or the numbers of its people were greatly reduced. The ſame errors in policy, and weakneſs of manners, which prevent the proper uſe of reſources, likewiſe check their increaſe, or improvement.

The wealth of the ſtate conſiſts in the fortune of its members. The actual revenue of the ſtate is that ſhare of every private fortune, which the public has been accuſtomed to demand for national purpoſes. This revenue cannot be always proportioned to what may be ſuppoſed redundant in the private eſtate, but to what is, in ſome meaſure, thought ſo by the owner; and to what he may be made to ſpare,

ſpare, without intrenching on his manner of living, and without ſuſpending his projects of expence, or of commerce. It ſhould appear, therefore, that any immoderate increaſe of private expence is a prelude to national weakneſs: government, even while each of its ſubjects conſumes a princely eſtate, may be ſtraitened in point of revenue, and the paradox be explained by example, That the public is poor, while its members are rich.

We are frequently led into error by miſtaking money for riches; we think that a people cannot be impoveriſhed by a waſt of money which is ſpent among themſelves. The fact is, that men are impoveriſhed, only in two ways; either by having their gains ſuſpended, or by having their ſubſtance conſumed; and money expended at home, being circulated, and not conſumed, cannot, any more than the exchange of a tally, or a counter, among a certain number of hands, tend to diminiſh the wealth of the company among whom it is handed about. But while money circulates at home, the neceſſaries of life, which are the real conſtituents of wealth may be idly conſumed; the induſtry which might be employed to increaſe the ſtock of a people, may be ſuſpended, or turned to abuſe.

Great armies, maintained either at home or abroad, without any national object, are ſo many mouths unneceſſarily opened to waſte the ſtores of the public, and ſo many hands with-held from the

arts

arts by which its profits are made. Unsuccessful enterprises are so many ventures thrown away, and losses sustained, proportioned to the capital employed in the service. The Helvetii, in order to invade the Roman province of Gaul, burnt their habitations, dropt their instruments of husbandry, and consumed, in one year, the savings of many. The enterprise failed of success, and the nation was undone.

STATES have endeavoured, in some instances, by pawning their credit, instead of employing their capital, to disguise the hazards they ran. They have found, in the loans they raised, a casual resource, which encouraged their enterprises. They have seemed, by their manner of erecting transferable funds, to leave the capital for purposes of trade, in the hands of the subject, while it is actually expended by the government. They have, by these means, proceeded to the execution of great national projects, without suspending private industry, and have left future ages to answer, in part, for debts contracted with a view to future emolument. So far the expedient is plausible, and appears to be just. The growing burden too, is thus gradually laid; and if a nation be to sink in some future age, every minister hopes it may still keep afloat in his own. But the measure, for this very reason, is, with all its advantages, extremely dangerous, in the hands of a precipitant and ambitious administration, regarding only the present occasion, and imagining

gining a ſtate to be inexauſtible, while a capital can be borrowed, and the intereſt be paid.

We are told of a nation, who, during a certain period, rivalled the glories of the ancient world, threw off the dominion of a maſter armed againſt them with the powers of a great kingdom, broke the yoke with which they had been oppreſſed, and almoſt within the courſe of a century, raiſed, by their induſtry and national vigour, a new and formidable power, which ſtruck the former potentates of Europe with awe and ſuſpence, and turned the badges of poverty with which they ſet out, into the enſigns of war and dominion. This end was attained by the great efforts of a ſpirit awaked by oppreſſion, by a ſucceſsful purſuit of national wealth, and by a rapid anticipation of future revenue. But this illuſtrious ſtate is ſuppoſed, not only in the language of a former ſection, to have pre-occupied the buſineſs; they have ſequeſtered the inheritance of many ages to come.

Great national expence, however, does not imply the neceſſity of any national ſuffering. While revenue is applied with ſucceſs, to obtain ſome valuable end; the profits of every adventure, being more than ſufficient to repay its coſts, the public ſhould gain, and its reſources ſhould continue to multiply. But an expence, whether ſuſ-

tained

tained at home or abroad, whether a waste of the present, or an anticipation of future, revenue, if it bring no proper return, is to be reckoned among the causes of national ruin.

PART SIXTH.

OF

CORRUPTION and POLITICAL Slavery.

SECTION I.

Of Corruption in General.

IF the fortune of nations, and their tendency to aggrandifement, or to ruin, were to be eftimated by merely balancing, on the principles of laft fection, articles of profit and lofs, every argument in politics would reft on a comparifon of national expence with national gain; on a comparifon of the numbers who confume, with thofe who produce or amafs the neceffaries of life. The columns of the induftrious, and the idle, would include all orders of men; and the ftate itfelf, being allowed as many magiftrates, politicians, and warriors, as were barely fufficient for its defence and its government,

ment, ſhould place, on the ſide of its loſs, every name that is ſupernumerary on the civil or the military liſt; all thoſe orders of men, who, by the poſſeſſion of fortune, ſubſiſt on the gains of others, and by the nicety of their choice, require a great expence of time and of labour, to ſupply their conſumption; all thoſe who are idly employed in the train of perſons of rank; all thoſe who are engaged in the profeſſions of law, phyſic, or divinity, together with all the learned, who do not, by their ſtudies, promote or improve the practice of ſome lucrative trade. The value of every perſon, in ſhort, ſhould be computed from his labour; and that of labour itſelf, from its tendency to procure and amaſs the means of ſubſiſtence. The arts employed on mere ſuperfluities ſhould be prohibited, except when their produce could be exchanged with foreign nations, for commodities that might be employed to maintain uſeful men for the public.

THESE appear to be the rules by which a miſer would examine the ſtate of his own affairs, or thoſe of his country; but ſchemes of perfect corruption are at leaſt as impracticable as ſchemes of perfect virtue. Men are not univerſally miſers; they will not be ſatisfied with the pleaſure of hoarding; they muſt be ſuffered to enjoy their wealth, in order that they may take the trouble of becoming rich. Property, in the common courſe of human affairs, is unequally divided: We are therefore obliged to ſuffer the wealthy to ſquander, that the poor may

ſubſiſt; we are obliged to tolerate certain orders of men, who are above the neceſſity of labour, in order that, in their condition, there may be an object of ambition, and a rank to which the buſy aſpire. We are not only obliged to admit numbers, who, in ſtrict œconomy, may be reckoned ſuperfluous, on the civil, the military, and the political liſt; but becauſe we are men, and prefer the occupation, improvement, and felicity of our nature, to its mere exiſtence, we muſt even wiſh, that as many members as poſſible, of every community, may be admitted to a ſhare of its defence and its government.

Men, in fact, while they purſue in ſociety different objects, or ſeparate views, procure a wide diſtribution of power, and by a ſpecies of chance, arrive at a poſture for civil engagements, more favourable to human nature than what human wiſdom could ever calmly deviſe.

If the ſtrength of a nation, in the mean time, conſiſts in the men on whom it may rely, and who are fortunately or wiſely combined for its preſervation, it follows, that manners are as important as either numbers or wealth; and that corruption is to be accounted a principal cauſe of the national declenſion and ruin.

Whoever perceives what are the qualities of man in his excellence, may eaſily, by that ſtandard,

diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh his defects or corruptions. If an intelligent, a courageous, and an affectionate mind, conſtitutes the perfection of his nature, remarkable failings in any of thoſe particulars, muſt proportionally ſink or debaſe his character.

We have obſerved, that it is the happineſs of the individual to make a right choice of his conduct; that this choice will lead him to loſe in ſociety the ſenſe of a perſonal intereſt; and, in the conſideration of what is due to the whole, to ſtifle thoſe anxieties which relate to himſelf as a part.

The natural diſpoſition of man to humanity, and the warmth of his temper, may raiſe his character to this fortunate pitch. His elevation, in a great meaſure, depends on the form of his ſociety; but he can, without incurring the charge of corruption, accommodate himſelf to great variations in the conſtitutions of government. The ſame integrity, and vigorous ſpirit, which, in democratical ſtates, renders him tenacious of his equality, may, under ariſtocracy or monarchy, lead him to maintain the ſubordinations eſtabliſhed He may entertain, towards the different ranks of men with whom he is yoked in the ſtate, maxims of reſpect and of candour: he may, in the choice of his actions follow a principle of juſtice, and of honour, which the conſiderations of ſafety, preferment, or profit, cannot efface.

From

From our complaints of national depravity, it ſhould, notwithſtanding, appear, that whole bodies of men are ſometimes infected with an epidemical weakneſs of the head, or corruption of heart, by which they become unfit for the ſtations they occupy, and threaten the ſtates they compoſe, however flouriſhing, with a proſpect of decay, and of ruin.

A change of national manners for the worſe, may ariſe from a diſcontinuance of the ſcenes in which the talents of men were happily cultivated, and brought into exerciſe; or from a change in the prevailing opinions relating to the conſtituents of honour or of happineſs. When mere riches, or court-favour, are ſuppoſed to conſtitute rank; the mind is miſled from the conſideration of qualities on which it ought to rely. Magnanimity, courage, and the love of mankind, are ſacrificed to avarice, and vanity, or ſuppreſſed under a ſenſe of dependence. The individual conſiders his community ſo far only as it can be rendered ſubſervient to his perſonal advancement or profit: he ſtates himſelf in competition with his fellow creatures; and, urged by the paſſions of emulation, of fear and jealouſy, of envy and malice, he follows the maxims of an animal deſtined to preſerve his ſeparate exiſtence, and to indulge his caprice or his appetite, at the expence of his ſpecies.

On this corrupt foundation, men become either rapacious, deceitful, and violent, ready to treſpaſs on the rights of others; or ſervile, mercenary, and baſe, prepared to relinquiſh their own. Talents, capacity, and force of mind, poſſeſſed by a perſon of the firſt deſcription, ſerve to plunge him the deeper in miſery, and to ſharpen the agony of cruel paſſions; which lead him to wreak on his fellow-creatures the torments that prey on himſelf. To a perſon of the ſecond, imagination, and reaſon itſelf, only ſerve to point out falſe objects of fear, or deſire, and to multiply the ſubjects of diſappointment, and of momentary joy. In either caſe, and whether we ſuppoſe that corrupt men are urged by covetouſneſs, or betrayed by fear, and without ſpecifying the crimes which from either diſpoſition they are prepared to commit, we may ſafely affirm, with Socrates, "That every maſter ſhould pray he may "not meet with ſuch a ſlave; and every ſuch per-"ſon, being unfit for liberty, ſhould implore that "he may meet with a merciful maſter."

Man, under this meaſure of corruption, although he may be bought for a ſlave by thoſe who know how to turn his faculties and his labour to profit; and although, when kept under proper reſtraints, his neighbourhood may be convenient or uſeful; yet is certainly unfit to act on the footing of a liberal combination or concert with his fellow-creatures: His mind is not addicted to friendſhip or confidence; he is not willing to act for the preſervation of

of others, nor deserves that any other should hazard his own safety for his.

The actual character of mankind, mean time, in the worst, as well as the best condition, is undoubtedly mixed: And nations of the best description are greatly obliged for their preservation, not only to the good disposition of their members, but likeways to those political institutions, by which the violent are restrained from the commission of crimes, and the cowardly, or the selfish, are made to contribute their part to the public defence or prosperity. By means of such institutions, and the wise precautions of government, nations are enabled to subsist, and even to prosper, under very different degrees of corruption, or of public integrity.

So long as the majority of a people are supposed to act on maxims of probity, the example of the good, and even the caution of the bad, give a general appearance of integrity, and of innocence. Where men are to one another objects of affection and of confidence, where they are generally disposed not to offend, government may be remiss; and every person may be treated as innocent, till he is found to be guilty. As the subject, in this case, does not hear of the crimes, so he need not be told of the punishments inflicted on persons of a different character. But where the manners of a people are considerably changed for the worse, every subject must stand on his guard, and government itself

muſt act on ſuitable maxims of fear and diſtruſt. The individual, no longer fit to be indulged in his pretenſions to perſonal conſideration, independence, or freedom, each of which he would turn to abuſe, muſt be taught, by external force, and from motives of fear, to counterfeit thoſe effects of innocence, and of duty, to which he is not diſpoſed: He muſt be referred to the whip, or the gibbet, for arguments in ſupport of a caution, which the ſtate now requires him to aſſume, on a ſuppoſition that he is inſenſible to the motives which recommend the practice of virtue.

The rules of deſpotiſm are made for the government of corrupted men. They were indeed followed on ſome remarkable occaſions, even under the Roman commonwealth; and the bloody axe, to terrify the citizen from his crimes, and to repel the caſual and temporary irruptions of vice, was repeatedly committed to the arbitrary will of the dictator. They were finally eſtabliſhed on the ruins of the republic itſelf, when either the people became too corrupted for freedom, or when the magiſtrate became too corrupted to reſign his dictatorial power. This ſpecies of government comes naturally in the termination of a continued and growing corruption; but has no doubt, in ſome inſtances, come too ſoon, and has ſacrificed remains of virtue, that deſerved a better fate, to the jealouſy of tyrants, who were in haſte to augment their power. This method of government cannot,

cannot, in such cases, fail to introduce that measure of corruption, against whose external effects it is desired as a remedy. When fear is suggested as the only motive to duty, every heart becomes rapacious or base. And this medicine, if applied to a healthy body, is sure to create the distemper which in other cases it is destined to cure.

This is the manner of government into which the covetous, and the arrogant, to satiate their unhappy desires, would hurry their fellow-creatures: It is a manner of government to which the timorous and the servile submit at discretion; and when these characters of the rapacious and the timid divide mankind, even the virtues of Antoninus or Trajan, can do no more than apply, with candour and with vigour, the whip and the sword; and endeavour, by the hopes of reward, or the fear of punishment, to find a speedy and a temporary cure for the crimes, or the imbecilities of men.

Other states may be more or less corrupted: This has corruption for its basis. Here justice may sometimes direct the arm of the despotical sovereign; but the name of justice is most commonly employed to signify the interest, or the caprice, of a reigning power. Human society, susceptible of such a variety of forms, here finds the simplest of all. The toils and possessions of many are destined to asswage the passions of one or a few; and the only parties that remain among mankind, are the oppressor who demands, and the oppressed who dare not refuse.

Nations, while they were intitled to a milder fate, as in the caſe of the Greeks, repeatedly conquered, have been reduced to this condition by military force. They have reached it too in the maturity of their own depravations; when, like the Romans, returned from the conqueſt, and loaded with the ſpoils of the world, they give looſe to faction, and to crimes too bold and too frequent for the correction of ordinary government; and when the ſword of juſtice, dropping with blood, and perpetually required to ſuppreſs accumulating diſorders on every ſide, could no longer await the delays and precautions of an adminiſtration fettered by laws*.

It is, however, well known from the hiſtory of mankind, that corruption of this, or of any other degree, is not peculiar to nations in their decline, or in the reſult of ſignal proſperity, and great advances in the arts of commerce. The bands of ſociety, indeed, in ſmall and infant eſtabliſhments, are generally ſtrong; and their ſubjects, either by an ardent devotion to their own tribe, or a vehement animoſity againſt enemies, and by a vigorous courage founded on both, are well qualified to urge, or to ſuſtain, the fortune of a growing community. But the ſavage, and the barbarian, have given, notwithſtanding, in the caſe of entire nations, ſome examples of a weak and timorous character†.

* Saluſt. Bell. Catalinarium.

† The barbarous nations of Siberia, in general, are ſervile and timid.

They have, in more inſtances, fallen into that ſpecies of corruption which we have already deſcribed in treating of barbarous nations; they have made rapine their trade, not merely as a ſpecies of warfare, or with a view to enrich their community, but to poſſeſs, in property, what they learned to prefer even to the ties of affection or of blood.

In the loweſt ſtate of commercial arts, the paſſions for wealth, and for dominion, have exhibited ſcenes of oppreſſion or ſervility, which the moſt finiſhed corruption of the arrogant, the cowardly, and the mercenary, founded on the deſire of procuring, or the fear of loſing, a fortune, could not exceed. In ſuch caſes, the vices of men, unreſtrained by forms, and unawed by police, are ſuffered to riot at large, and to produce their entire effects. Parties accordingly unite, or ſeparate, on the maxims of a gang of robbers: they ſacrifice to intereſt the tendereſt affections of human nature. The parent ſuplies the market for ſlaves, even by the ſale of his own children; the cottage ceaſes to be a ſanctuary for the weak and the defenceleſs ſtranger; and the rites of hoſpitality, often ſo ſacred among nations in their primitive ſtate, come to be violated, like every other tie of humanity, without fear or remorſe*.

Nations, which in later periods of their hiſtory became eminent for civil wiſdom and juſtice, had, perhaps, in a former age paroxyſms of lawleſs diſ-

* Chardin's travels through Mingrelia into Perſia.

order,

order, to which this defcription might in part be applied. The very policy by which they arrived at their degree of national felicity, was devifed as a remedy for outrageous abufe. The eftablifhment of order was dated from the commiffion of rapes and murders; indignation, and private revenge, were the principles on which nations proceeded to the expulfion of tyrants, to the emancipation of mankind, and the full explanation of their political rights.

Defects of government, and of law, may be in fome cafes confidered as a fymptom of innocence and of virtue. But where power is already eftablifhed, where the ftrong are unwilling to fuffer reftraint, or the weak unable to find a protection, the defects of law are marks of the moft perfect corruption.

Among rude nations, government is often defective; both becaufe men are not yet acquainted with all the evils for which polifhed nations have endeavoured to find a redrefs; and becaufe, even where evils of the moft flagrant nature have long afflicted the peace of fociety, they have not yet been able to apply the cure. In the progrefs of civilization, new diftempers break forth, and new remedies are applied: but the remedy is not always applied the moment the diftemper appears; and laws, though fuggefted by the commiffion of crimes, are not the fymptom of a recent corruption, but of a defire

desire to find a remedy that may cure, perhaps, some inveterate evil which has long afflicted the state.

THERE are corruptions, however, under which men still possess the vigour and the resolution to correct themselves. Such are the violence and the outrage which accompany the collision of fierce and daring spirits, occupied in the struggles which sometimes precede the dawn of civil and commercial improvements. In such cases, men have frequently discovered a remedy for evils, of which their own misguided impetuosity, and superior force of mind, were the principal causes. But if to a depraved disposition, we suppose to be joined a weakness of spirit; if to an admiration, and desire of riches, be joined an aversion to danger or business; if those orders of men whose valour is required by the public, cease to be brave; if the members of society, in general, have not those personal qualities which are required to fill the stations of equality, or of honour, to which they are invited by the forms of the state; they must sink to a depth from which their imbecility, even more than their depraved inclinations, may prevent their rise.

SECT.

SECTION II.

Of Luxury.

WE are far from being agreed on the application of the term *luxury*, or on that degree of its meaning which is consistent with national prosperity, or with the moral rectitude of our nature. It is sometimes employed to signify a manner of life which we think necessary to civilization, and even to happiness. It is, in our panegyric of polished ages, the parant of arts, the support of commerce, and the minister of national greatness, and of opulence. It is, in our censure of degenerate manners, the source of corruption, and the presage of national declension and ruin. It is admired, and it is blamed; it is treated as ornamental and useful; and it is proscribed as a vice.

WITH all this diversity in our judgments, we are generally uniform in employing the term to signify that complicated apparatus which mankind devise for the ease and convenience of life. Their buildings, furniture, equipage, cloathing, train of domestics, refinement of the table, and, in general, all that assemblage which is rather intended to please the fancy, than to obviate real wants, and which is rather ornamental than useful.

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When we are disposed therefore, under the appellation of *luxury*, to rank the enjoyment of these things among the vices, we either tacitly refer to the habits of sensuality, debauchery, prodigality, vanity, and arrogance, with which the possession of high fortune is sometimes attended; or we apprehend a certain measure of what is necessary to human life, beyond which all enjoyments are supposed to be excessive and vicious. When, on the contrary, luxury is made an article of national lustre and felicity, we only think of it as an innocent consequence of the unequal distribution of wealth, and as a method by which different ranks are rendered mutually dependent, and mutually useful. The poor are made to practise arts, and the rich to reward them. The public itself is made a gainer by what seems to waste its stock, and it receives a perpetual increase of wealth, from the influence of those growing appetites, and delicate tastes, which seem to menace consumption and ruin.

It is certain, that we must either, together with the commercial arts, suffer their fruits to be enjoyed, and even, in some measure, admired; or, like the Spartans, prohibit the art itself, while we are afraid of its consequences, or while we think that the conveniencies it brings exceed what nature requires. But we may propose to stop the advancement of arts at any stage of their progress, and still incur the censure of luxury from those who have not advanced so far. The house-builder and the carpenter at

Sparta were limited to the uſe of the axe and the ſaw; but a Spartan cottage might have paſſed for a palace in Thrace: and if the diſpute were to turn on the knowledge of what is phyſically neceſſary to the preſervation of human life, as the ſtandard of what is morally lawful, the faculties of phyſic, as well as of morality, would probably divide on the ſubject, and leave every individual, as at preſent, to find ſome rule for himſelf. The caſuiſt, for the moſt part, conſiders the practice of his own age and condition, as a ſtandard for mankind. If in one age or condition, he condemn the uſe of a coach, in another he would have no leſs cenſured the wearing of ſhoes; and the very perſon who exclaims againſt the firſt, would probably not have ſpared the ſecond, if it had not been already familiar in ages before his own. A cenſor born in a cottage, and accuſtomed to ſleep upon ſtraw, does not propoſe that men ſhould return to the woods and the caves for ſhelter; he admits the reaſonableneſs and the utility of what is already familiar; and apprehends an exceſs and corruption, only in the neweſt refinement of the riſing generation.

The clergy of Europe, have preached ſucceſſively againſt every new faſhion, and every innovation in dreſs. The modes of youth are a ſubject of cenſure to the old; and modes of the laſt age, in their turn, are matter of ridicule to the flippant, and the young. Of this there is not always a better account to be given, than that the old are diſpoſed to be ſevere, and the young to be merry.

THE argument against many of the conveniencies of life, drawn from the mere consideration of their not being necessary, was equally proper in the mouth of the savage, who dissuaded from the first applications of industry, as it is in that of the moralist, who insists on the vanity of the last. "Our "ancestors," he might say, "found their dwelling "under this rock; they gathered their food in the "forest; they allayed their thirst from the fountain; "and they were cloathed in the spoils of the beast "they had slain. Why should we indulge a false "delicacy, or require from the earth fruits which "she is not accustomed to yield? The bow of our "father is already too strong for our arms; and "the wild beast begins to lord it in the woods."

THUS the moralist may have found, in the proceedings of every age, those topics of blame, from which he is so much disposed to arraign the manners of his own; and our embarrassment on the subject, is, perhaps, but a part of that general perplexity which we undergo, in trying to define moral characters by external circumstances, which may, or may not, be attended with faults in the mind and the heart. One man finds a vice in the wearing of linen; another does not, unless the fabric be fine: and if, mean-time, it be true, that a person may be dressed in manufacture, either coarse or fine; that he may sleep in the fields, or lodge in a palace; tread upon carpet, or plant his foot on the ground; while the mind either retains,

or has loſt its penetration, and its vigour, and the heart its affection to mankind, it is vain, under any ſuch circumſtance, to ſeek for the diſtinctions of virtue and vice, or to tax the poliſhed citizen with weakneſs for any part of his equipage, or for his wearing a fur, in which, perhaps ſome ſavage was dreſſed before him. Vanity is not diſtinguiſhed by any peculiar ſpecies of dreſs. It is betrayed by the Indian in the phantaſtic aſſortments of his plumes, his ſhells, his party-coloured furs, and in the time he beſtows at the glaſs and the toilet. Its projects in the woods and in the town are the ſame: in the one, it ſeeks, with the viſage bedaubed, and with teeth artificially ſtained, for that admiration, which it courts in the other with a gilded equipage, and liveries of ſtate.

POLISHED nations, in their progreſs, often come to ſurpaſs the rude in moderation, and ſeverity of manners. "The Greeks," ſays Thucydides, "not "long ago, like barbarians, wore golden ſpangles "in the hair, and went armed in times of peace." Simplicity of dreſs in this people, became a mark of politeneſs; and the mere materials with which the body is nouriſhed or cloathed, are probably of little conſequence to any people. We muſt look for the characters of men in the qualities of the mind, not in the ſpecies of their food, or in the mode of their apparel. What are now the ornaments of the grave, and ſevere; what is owned to be a real conveniency, were once the fopperies of youth,

youth, or were devifed to pleafe the effeminate. The new fafhion, indeed, is often the mark of the coxcomb; but we frequently change our fafhions, without multiplying coxcombs, or increafing the meafures of our vanity and folly.

Are the apprehenfions of the fevere, therefore, in every age, equally groundlefs and unreafonable? Are we never to dread any error in the article of a refinement beftowed on the means of fubfiftence, or the conveniencies of life? The fact is, that men are perpetually expofed to the commiffion of error in this article, not merely where they are accuftomed to high meafures of accommodation, or to any particular fpecies of food, but where-ever thefe objects, in general, may come to be preferred to their character, to their country, or to mankind; they actually commit fuch error, where-ever they admire paultry diftinctions or frivolous advantages; where-ever they fhrink from fmall inconveniencies, and are incapable of difcharging their duty with vigour. The ufe of morality on this fubject, is not to limit men to any particular fpecies of lodging, diet, or cloaths; but to prevent their confidering thefe conveniencies as the principal objects of human life. And if we are afked, Where the purfuit of trifling accommodations fhould ftop, in order that a man may devote himfelf entirely to the higher engagements of life? we may anfwer, That it fhould ftop where it is. This was the rule followed at Sparta: The object of the rule was, to preferve the heart

entire

entire for the public, and to occupy men in cultivating their own nature, not in accumulating wealth, and external conveniencies. It was not expected otherways, that the axe or the ſaw ſhould be attended with greater political advantage, than the plane and the chiſel. When Cato walked the ſtreets of Rome without his robe, and without ſhoes, he did ſo, moſt probably, in contempt of what his countrymen were ſo prone to admire; not in hopes of finding a virtue in one ſpecies of dreſs, or a vice in another.

Luxury, therefore, conſidered as a predilection in favour of the objects of vanity, and the coſtly materials of pleaſure, is ruinous to the human character; conſidered as the mere uſe of accommodations and conveniencies which the age has procured, rather depends on the progreſs which the mechanical arts have made, and on the degree in which the fortunes of men are unequally parcelled, than on the diſpoſitions of particular men either to vice or to virtue.

Different meaſures of luxury are, however, variouſly ſuited to different conſtitutions of government. The advancement of arts ſuppoſes an unequal diſtribution of fortune; and the means of diſtinction they bring, ſerve to render the ſeparation of ranks more ſenſible. Luxury is, upon this account, apart from all its moral effects, adverſe to the form of democratical government; and in any

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ſtate of ſociety, can be ſafely admitted in that degree only in which the members of a community are ſuppoſed of unequal rank, and conſtitute public order by the relations of ſuperior and vaſſal. High degrees of it appear ſalutary, and even neceſſary, in monarchical and mixed governments; where, beſides the encouragement to arts and commerce, it ſerves to give luſtre to thoſe hereditary or conſtitutional dignities which have a place of importance in the political ſyſtem. Whether even here luxury leads to abuſe peculiar to ages of high refinement and opulence, we ſhall proceed to conſider in the following ſections.

SECTION III.

Of the Corruption incident to Poliſhed Nations.

LUXURY and corruption are frequently coupled together, and even paſs for ſynonymous terms. But, in order to avoid any diſpute about words, by the firſt we may underſtand that accumulation of wealth, and that refinement on the ways of enjoying it, which are the objects of induſtry, or the fruits of mechanic and commercial arts: And by the ſecond a real weakneſs, or depravity of the human character, which may accompany any ſtate of thoſe arts, and be found under any external circumſtances or condition whatſoever. It remains to inquire, What are the corruptions incident to poliſhed nations, arrived at certain meaſures of luxury, and poſſeſſed of certain advantages, in which they are generally ſuppoſed to excel?

WE need not have recourſe to a parallel between the manners of entire nations, in the extremes of civilization and rudeneſs, in order to be ſatisfied, that the vices of men are not proportioned to their fortunes; or that the habits of avarice, or of ſenſuality, are not founded on any certain meaſures of wealth, or determinate kind of enjoyment. Where the ſituations of particular men are varied as much by their perſonal ſtations, as they can be by the

ſtate

state of national refinements, the same passions for interest, or pleasure, prevail in every condition. They arise from temperament, or an acquired admiration of property; nor from any particular manner of life in which the parties are engaged, nor from any particular species of property, which may have occupied their cares and their wishes.

TEMPERANCE and moderation are, at least, as frequent among those whom we call the superior, as they are among the lower classes of men; and however we may affix the character of sobriety to mere cheapness of diet, and other accommodations with which any particular age, or rank of men, appear to be contented, it is well known, that costly materials are not necessary to constitute a debauch, nor profligacy less frequent under the thatched roof, than under the lofty ceiling. Men grow equally familiar with different conditions, receive equal pleasure, and are equally allured to sensuality, in the palace, and in the cave. Their acquiring in either habits of intemperance or sloth, depends on the remission of other pursuits, and on the distaste of the mind to other engagements. If the affections of the heart be awake, and the passions of love, admiration, or anger, be kindled, the costly furniture of the palace, as well as the homely accommodations of the cottage, are neglected: And men, when roused, reject their repose; or, when fatigued, embrace it alike on the silken bed, or on the couch of straw.

We are not, however, from hence to conclude, that luxury, with all its concomitant circumſtances, which either ſerve to favour its increaſe, or which, in the arrangements of civil ſociety, follow it as conſequences, can have no effect to the diſadvantage of national manners. If that reſpite from public dangers and troubles which gives a leiſure for the practice of commercial arts, be continued, or increaſed, into a diſuſe of national efforts; if the individual, not called to unite with his country, be left to purſue his private advantage; we may find him become effeminate, mercenary, and ſenſual; not becauſe pleaſures and profits are become more alluring, but becauſe he has fewer calls to attend to other objects; and becauſe he has more encouragement to ſtudy his perſonal advantages, and purſue his ſeparate intereſts.

If the diſparities of rank and fortune which are neceſſary to the purſuit or enjoyment of luxury, introduce falſe grounds of precedency and eſtimation; if, on the mere conſiderations of being rich or poor, one order of men are, in their own apprehenſion, elevated, another debaſed; if one be criminally proud, another meanly dejected; and every rank in its place, like the tyrant, who thinks that nations are made for himſelf, be diſpoſed to aſſume on the rights of mankind: although, upon the compariſon, the higher order may be leaſt corrupted; or from education, and a ſenſe of perſonal dignity, have moſt good qualities remaining; yet the one

becoming mercenary and servile; the other imperious and arrogant; both regardless of justice, and of merit; the whole mass is corrupted, and the manners of a society changed for the worse, in proportion as its members cease to act on principles of equality, independence, or freedom.

Upon this view, and considering the merits of men in the abstract, a mere change from the habits of a republic to those of a monarchy; from the love of equality, to the sense of a subordination founded on birth, titles, and fortune, is a species of corruption to mankind. But this degree of corruption is still consistent with the safety and prosperity of some nations; it admits of a vigorous courage, by which the rights of individuals, and of kingdoms, may be long preserved.

Under the form of monarchy, while yet in its vigour, superior fortune is, indeed, one mark by which the different orders of men are distinguished; but there are some other ingredients, without which wealth is not admitted as a foundation of precedency, and in favour of which it is often despised, and lavished away. Such are birth and titles, the reputation of courage, courtly manners, and a certain elevation of mind. If we suppose, that these distinctions are forgotten, and nobility itself only to be known by the sumpuous retinue which money alone may procure; and by a lavish expence, which the more recent fortunes can generally best sustain;

luxury

luxury muſt then be allowed to corrupt the monarchical as much as the republican ſtate, and to introduce a fatal diſſolution of manners, under which men of every condition, although they are eager to acquire, or to diſplay their wealth, have no remains of real ambition. They have neither the elevation of nobles, nor the fidelity of ſubjects; they have changed into effeminate vanity, that ſenſe of honour which gave rules to the perſonal courage; and into a ſervile baſeneſs, that loyalty, which bound each in his place, to his immediate ſuperior, and the whole to the throne.

Nations are moſt expoſed to corruption from this quarter, when the mechanical arts, being greatly advanced, furniſh numberleſs articles, to be applied in ornament to the perſon, in furniture, entertainment, or equipage; when ſuch articles as the rich alone can procure are admired; and when conſideration, precedence, and rank, are accordingly made to depend on fortune.

In a more rude ſtate of the arts, although wealth be unequally divided, the opulent can amaſs only the ſimple means of ſubſiſtence: They can only fill the granary, and furniſh the ſtall; reap from more extended fields, and drive their herds over a larger paſture. To enjoy their magnificence, they muſt live in a croud; and to ſecure their poſſeſſions, they muſt be ſurrounded with friends that eſpouſe their quarrels. Their honours, as well as their ſafety, conſiſt

consist in the numbers who attend them; and their personal distinctions are taken from their liberality, and supposed elevation of mind. In this manner, the possession of riches serves only to make the owner assume a character of magnanimity, to become the guardian of numbers, or the public object of respect and affection. But when the bulky constituents of wealth, and of rustic magnificence, can be exchanged for refinements; and when the produce of the soil may be turned into equipage, and mere decoration; when the combination of many is no longer required for personal safety; the master may become the sole consumer of his own estate: he may refer the use of every subject to himself; he may employ the materials of generosity to feed a personal vanity, or to indulge a sickly and effeminate fancy, which has learned to enumerate the trappings of weakness or folly among the necessaries of life.

The Persian satrape, we are told, when he saw the King of Sparta at the place of their conference, stretched on the grass with his soldiers, blushed at the provision he made for the accommodation of his own person; he ordered the furs and the carpets to be withdrawn; he felt his own inferiority; and recollected, that he was to treat with a man, not to vie with a pageant in costly attire and magnificence.

WHEN,

When, amidſt circumſtances that make no trial of the virtues or talents of men, we have been accuſtomed to the air of ſuperiority, which people of fortune derive from their retinue, we are apt to loſe every ſenſe of diſtinction ariſing from merit, or even from abilities. We rate our fellow-citizens by the *figure* they are able to make; by their buildings, their dreſs, their equipage, and the train of their followers. All theſe circumſtances make a part in our eſtimate of what is excellent; and if the maſter himſelf is known to be a pageant in the midſt of his fortune, we nevertheleſs pay our court to his ſtation, and look up with an envious, ſervile, or dejected mind, to what is, in itſelf, ſcarcely fit to amuſe children; though, when it is worn as a badge of diſtinction, it inflames the ambition of thoſe we call the great, and ſtrikes the multitude with awe and reſpect.

We judge of entire nations by the productions of a few mechanical arts, and think we are talking of men, while we are boaſting of their eſtates, their dreſs, and their palaces. The ſenſe in which we apply the terms, *great*, and *noble*, *high rank*, and *high life*, ſhew, that we have, on ſuch occaſions, transferred the idea of perfection from the character to the equipage; and that excellence itſelf is, in our eſteem, a mere pageant, adorned at a great expence, by the labours of many workmen.

To

To those who overlook the subtile transitions of the imagination, it might appear, since wealth can do no more than furnish the means of subsistence, and purchase animal pleasures, that covetousness and venality itself, should keep pace with our fears of want, or with our appetite for sensual enjoyments; and that where the appetite is satiated, and the fear of want is removed, the mind should be at ease on the subject of fortune. But they are not the mere pleasures that riches procure, nor the choice of viands which cover the board of the wealthy, that inflame the passions of the covetous and the mercenary. Nature is easily satisfied in all her enjoyments. It is an opinion of eminence, connected with fortune; it is a sense of debasement attending on poverty, which renders us blind to every advantage, but that of the rich; and insensible to every disgrace, but that of the poor. It is this unhappy apprehension, that occasionally prepares us for the desertion of every duty, for a submission to every indignity, and for the commission of every crime that can be accomplished in safety.

Aurengzebe was not more renowned for sobriety in his private station, and in the conduct of a supposed dissimulation, by which he aspired to sovereign power, than he continued to be, even on the throne of Indostan. Simple, abstinent, and severe in his diet, and other pleasures, he still led the life of a hermit, and occupied his time with a seem-

feemingly painful application to the affairs of a great empire *. He quitted a ftation in which, if pleafure had been his object, he might have indulged his fenfuality without referve; he made his way to a fcene of difquietude and care; he aimed at the fummit of human greatnefs, in the poffeffion of imperial fortune, not at the gratifications of animal appetite, or the enjoyment of eafe. Superior to fenfual pleafure, as well as to the feelings of nature, he dethroned his father, and he murdered his brothers, that he might roll on a carriage incrufted with diamond and pearl; that his elephants, his camels, and his horfes, on the march, might form a line extending many leagues; might prefent a glittering harnefs to the fun; and loaded with treafure, ufher to the view of an abject and admiring croud, that awful majefty, in whofe prefence they were to ftrike the forehead on the ground, and be overwhelmed with the fenfe of his greatnefs, and with that of their own debafement.

As thefe are the objects which prompt the defire of dominion, and excite the ambitious to aim the maftery of their fellow-creatures; fo they infpire the ordinary race of men with a fenfe of infirmity and meannefs, that prepares them to fuffer indignities, and to become the property of perfons, whom they confider as of a rank and a nature fo much fuperior to their own.

* Gemelli Careri.

THE

The chains of perpetual slavery, accordingly, appear to be rivetted in the East, no less by the pageantry which is made to accompany the possession of power, than they are by the fears of the sword, and the terrors of a military execution. In the West, as well as the East, we are willing to bow to the splendid equipage, and stand at an awful distance from the pomp of a princely estate. We too, may be terrified by the frowns, or won by the smiles of those whose favour is riches and honour, and whose displeasure is poverty and neglect. We too may overlook the honours of the human soul, from an admiration of the pageantries that accompany fortune. The procession of elephants harnessed with gold might dazzle into slaves, the people who derive corruption and weakness from the effect of their own arts and contrivances, as well as those who inherit servility from their ancestors, and are enfeebled by their natural temperament, and the enervating charms of their soil, and their climate.

It appears, therefore, that although the mere use of materials which constitute luxury, may be distinguished from actual vice; yet nations under a high state of the commercial arts, are exposed to corruption, by their admitting wealth, unsupported by personal elevation and virtue, as the great foundation of distinction, and by having their attention turned on the side of interest, as the road to consideration and honour.

WITH this effect, luxury may ſerve to corrupt democratical ſtates, by introducing a ſpecies of monarchical ſubordination, without that ſenſe of high birth and hereditary honours which render the boundaries of rank fixed and determinate, and which teach men to act in their ſtations with force and propriety. It may prove the occaſion of political corruption, even in monarchical governments, by drawing reſpect towards mere wealth; by caſting a ſhade on the luſtre of perſonal qualities, or family-diſtinctions; and by infecting all orders of men, with equal venality, ſervility, and cowardice.

SECT.

SECTION IV.

The same Subject continued.

THE increasing regard with which men appear, in the progress of commercial arts, to study their profit, or the delicacy with which they refine on their pleasures; even industry itself, or the habit of application to a tedious employment, in which no honours are won, may, perhaps, be considered as indications of a growing attention to interest, or of effeminacy, contracted in the enjoyment of ease and conveniency. Every successive art, by which the individual is taught to improve on his fortune, is, in reality, an addition to his private engagements, and a new avocation of his mind from the public.

CORRUPTION, however, does not arise from the abuse of commercial arts alone; it requires the aid of political situation; and is not produced by the objects that occupy a sordid and a mercenary spirit, without the aid of circumstances that enable men to indulge in safety any mean disposition they have acquired.

PROVIDENCE has fitted mankind for the higher engagements which they are sometimes obliged to fulfil; and it is in the midst of such engagements that they are most likely to acquire or to preserve their

their virtues. The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties, not in enjoying the repoſe of a pacific ſtation; penetration and wiſdom are the fruits of experience, not the leſſons of retirement and leiſure; ardour and generoſity are the qualities of a mind rouſed and animated in the conduct of ſcenes that engage the heart, not the gifts of reflection or knowledge. The mere intermiſſion of national and political efforts is, notwithſtanding, ſometimes miſtaken for public good; and there is no miſtake more likely to foſter the vices, or to flatter the weakneſs, of feeble and intereſted men.

If the ordinary arts of policy, or rather, if a growing indifference to objects of a public nature, ſhould prevail, and, under any free conſtitution, put an end to thoſe diſputes of party, and ſilence that noiſe of diſſenſion, which generally accompany the exerciſe of freedom, we may venture to prognoſticate corruption to the national manners, as well as remiſſneſs to the national ſpirit. The period is come, when, no engagement remaining on the part of the public, private intereſt, and animal pleaſure, become the ſovereign objects of care. When men, being relieved from the preſſure of great occaſions, beſtow their attention on trifles; and having carried what they are pleaſed to call *ſenſibility* and *delicacy*, on the ſubject of eaſe or moleſtation, as far as real weakneſs or folly can go, have recourſe to affectation, in order to enhance the

pretended

pretended demands, and accumulate the anxieties, of a sickly fancy, and enfeebled mind.

In this condition, mankind generally flatter their own imbecility under the name of *politeness*. They are persuaded, that the celebrated ardour, generosity, and fortitude, of former ages, bordered on frenzy, or were the mere effects of necessity, on men who had not the means of enjoying their ease, or their pleasure. They congratulate themselves on having escaped the storm which required the exercise of such arduous virtues: and with that vanity which accompanies the human race in their meanest condition, they boast of a scene of affectation, of languor, or of folly, as the standard of human felicity, and as furnishing the properest exercise of a rational nature.

It is none of the least menacing symptoms of an age prone to degeneracy, that the minds of men become perplexed in the discernment of merit, as much as the spirit becomes enfeebled in conduct, and the heart mislead in the choice of its objects. The care of mere fortune is supposed to constitute wisdom; retirement from public affairs, and real indifference to mankind, receive the applauses of moderation, and of virtue.

Great fortitude, and elevation of mind, have not always, indeed, been employed in the attainment of valuable ends; but they are always respec-

table,

table, and they are always neceſſary when we would act for the good of mankind, in any of the more arduous ſtations of life. While, therefore, we blame their miſapplication, we ſhould beware of depreciating their value. Men of a ſevere and ſententious morality have not always ſufficiently obſerved this caution; nor have they been duly aware of the corruptions they flattered, by the ſatire they employed againſt what is aſpiring and prominent in the character of the human ſoul.

It might have been expected, that in an age of hopeleſs debaſement, the talents of Demoſthenes and Tully, even the ill-governed magnanimity of a Macedonian, or the daring enterpriſe of a Carthaginian leader, might have eſcaped the acrimony of a ſatiriſt *, who had ſo many objects of correction in his view, and who poſſeſſed the arts of declamation in ſo high a degree.

I, demens, et ſævos curre per Alpes,
Ut pueris placeas, et declamatio fias,

is part of the illiberal cenſure which is thrown by this poet on the perſon and action of a leader, who, by his courage and conduct, in the very ſervice to which the ſatire referred, had well nigh ſaved his country from the ruin with which it was at laſt overwhelmed.

* Juvenal's 10th ſatire.

Heroes

> Heroes are much the same, the point's agreed,
> From Macedonia's madman to the Swede,

is a distich, in which another poet of beautiful talents has attempted to depreciate a name, to which, probably, few of his readers are found to aspire.

If men must go wrong, there is a choice of their errors, as well as of their virtues. Ambition, the love of personal eminence, and the desire of fame, although they sometimes lead to the commission of crimes, yet always engage men in pursuits that require to be supported by some of the greatest qualities of the human soul; and if eminence is the principal object of pursuit, there is, at least, a probability, that those qualities may be studied on which a real elevation of mind is raised. But when public alarms have ceased, and contempt of glory is recommended as an article of wisdom, the sordid habits, and mercenary dispositions, to which, under a general indifference to national objects, the members of a polished or commercial state are exposed, must prove at once the most effectual suppression of every liberal sentiment, and the most fatal reverse of all those principles from which communities derive their strength and their hopes of preservation.

It is noble to possess happiness and independence, either in retirement, or in public life. The characteristic of the happy, is to acquit themselves well in every condition; in the court, or in the village;

village; in the ſenate, or in the private retreat. But if they affect any particular ſtation, it is ſurely that in which their actions may be rendered moſt extenſively uſeful. Our conſidering mere retirement, therefore, as a ſymptom of moderation, and of virtue, is either a remnant of that ſyſtem, under which monks and anchorets, in former ages, have been canonized; or proceeds from a habit of thinking, which appears equally fraught with moral corruption, from our conſidering public life as a ſcene for the gratification of mere vanity, avarice, and ambition; never as furniſhing the beſt opportunity for a juſt and a happy engagement of the mind and the heart.

Emulation, and the deſire of power, are but ſorry motives to public conduct; but if they have been, in any caſe, the principal inducements from which men have taken part in the ſervice of their country, any diminution of their prevalence or force is a real corruption of national manners; and the pretended moderation aſſumed by the higher orders of men, has a fatal effect in the ſtate. The diſintereſted love of the public, is a principle without which ſome conſtitutions of government cannot ſubſiſt: but when we conſider how ſeldom this has appeared a reigning paſſion, we have little reaſon to impute the proſperity or preſervation of nations, in every caſe, to its influence.

It

It is ſufficient, perhaps, under one form of government, that men ſhould be fond of their independence; that they ſhould be ready to oppoſe uſurpation, and to repel perſonal indignities: In another, it is ſufficient, that they ſhould be tenacious of their rank, and of their honours; and, inſtead of a zeal for the public, entertain a vigilant jealouſy of the rights which pertain to themſelves. When numbers of men retain a certain degree of elevation and fortitude; they are qualified to give a mutual check to their ſeveral errors, and are able to act in that variety of ſituations which the different conſtitutions of government have prepared for their members: But, under the diſadvantages of a feeble ſpirit, however directed, and however informed, no national conſtitution is ſafe; nor can any degree of enlargement to which a ſtate has arrived, ſecure its political welfare.

In ſtates where property, diſtinction, and pleaſure, are thrown out as baits to the imagination, and incentives to paſſion, the public ſeems to rely for the preſervation of its political life, on the degree of emulation and jealouſy with which parties mutually oppoſe and reſtrain each other. The deſires of preferment and profit in the breaſt of the citizen, are the motives from which he is excited to enter on public affairs, and are the conſiderations which direct his political conduct. The ſuppreſſion, therefore, of ambition, of party-animoſity, and of public envy, is probably, in every ſuch caſe,

not a reformation, but a ſymptom of weakneſs, and a prelude to more ſordid purſuits, and ruinous amuſements.

On the eve of ſuch a revolution in manners, the higher ranks, in every mixed or monarchical government, have need to take care of themſelves. Men of buſineſs, and of induſtry, in the inferior ſtations of life, retain their occupations, and are ſecured, by a kind of neceſſity, in the poſſeſſion of thoſe habits on which they rely for their quiet, and for the moderate enjoyments of life. But the higher orders of men, if they relinquiſh the ſtate, if they ceaſe to poſſeſs that courage and elevation of mind, and to exerciſe thoſe talents which are employed in its defence, and in its government, are, in reality, by the ſeeming advantages of their ſtation, become the refuſe of that ſociety of which they once were the ornament; and from being the moſt reſpectable, and the moſt happy, of its members, are become the moſt wretched and corrupt. In their approach to this condition, and in the abſence of every manly occupation, they feel a diſſatiſfaction and languor which they cannot explain: They pine in the midſt of apparent enjoyments, or, by the variety and caprice of their different purſuits and amuſements, exhibit a ſtate of agitation, which, like the diſquiet of ſickneſs, is not a proof of enjoyment or pleaſure, but of ſuffering and pain. The care of his buildings, his equipage, or his table, is choſen by one; literary amuſement, or ſome frivolous ſtudy, by

by another. The ſports of the country, and the diverſions of the town; the gaming-table*, dogs, horſes, and wine, are employed to fill up the blank of a liſtleſs and unprofitable life. They ſp[illegible] of human purſuits, as if the whole difficulty were to find ſomething to do: They fix on ſome f[illegible]ous occupation, as if there was nothing that deſerved to be done: They conſider what tends to the good of their fellow-creatures, as a diſadvantage to themſelves: They fly from every ſcene, in which any efforts of vigour are required, or in which they might be allured to perform any ſervice to their country. We miſapply our compaſſion in pitying the poor; it were much more juſtly applied to the rich, who become the firſt victims of that wretched inſignificance, into which the members of every corrupted ſtate, by the tendency of their weakneſſes, and their vices, are in haſte to plunge themſelves.

It is in this condition, that the ſenſual invent all thoſe refinements on pleaſure, and deviſe thoſe incentives to a ſatiated appetite, which tend to foſter the corruptions of a diſſolute age. The effects of brutal appetite, and the mere debauch, are more flagrant, and more violent, perhaps, in rude ages, than they are in the later periods of commerce and luxury:

* Theſe different occupations differ from each other, in reſpect to their dignity, and their innocence; but none of them are the ſchools from which men are brought to ſuſtain the tottering fortune of nations; they are equally avocations from what ought to be the principal purſuit of man, the good of mankind.

luxury. But that perpetual habit of ſearching for animal pleaſure where it is not to be found, in the gratifications of an appetite that is cloyed, and among the ruins of an animal conſtitution, is not more fatal to the virtues of the ſoul, than it is even to the enjoyment of ſloth, or of pleaſure; it is not a more certain avocation from public affairs, or a ſurer prelude to national decay, than it is a diſappointment to our hopes of private felicity.

In theſe reflections, it has been the object, not to aſcertain a preciſe meaſure to which corruption has riſen in any of the nations that have attained to eminence, or that have gone to decay; but to deſcribe that remiſſneſs of ſpirit, that weakneſs of ſoul, that ſtate of national debility, which is likely to end in political ſlavery; an evil which remains to be conſidered as the laſt object of caution, and beyond which there is no ſubject of diſquiſition in the periſhing fortunes of nations.

SECT.

SECTION V.

Of Corruption, as it tends to Political Slavery.

LIBERTY, in one ſenſe, appears to be the portion of poliſhed nations alone. The ſavage is perſonally free, becauſe he lives unreſtrained, and acts with the members of his tribe on terms of equality. The barbarian is frequently independent from a continuance of the ſame circumſtances, or becauſe he has courage and a ſword. But good policy alone can provide for the regular adminiſtration of juſtice, or conſtitute a force in the ſtate, which is ready on every occaſion to defend the rights of its members.

IT has been found, that, except in a few ſingular caſes the commercial and political arts have advanced together. Theſe arts have been in modern Europe ſo interwoven, that we cannot determine which were prior in the order of time, or derived moſt advantage from the mutual influences with which they act and re-act on each other. It has been obſerved, that in ſome nations the ſpirit of commerce, intent on ſecuring its profits, has led the way to political wiſdom. A people, poſſeſſed of wealth, and become jealous of their properties, have formed the project of emancipation, and have proceeded, under favour of an importance recently gained, ſtill farther to enlarge their pretenſions, and

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to diſpute the prerogatives which their ſovereign had been in uſe to employ. But it is in vain that we expect in one age, from the poſſeſſion of wealth, the effect which it is ſaid to have borne in a former. Great acceſſions of fortune, when recent, when accompanied with frugality, and a ſenſe of independence, may render the owner confident in his ſtrength, and ready to ſpurn at oppreſſion. The purſe which is open, not to perſonal expence, or to the indulgence of vanity, but to ſupport the intereſts of a faction, to gratify the higher paſſions of party, render the wealthy citizen formidable to thoſe who pretend to dominion; but it does not follow, that in a time of corruption, equal, or greater, meaſures of wealth ſhould operate to the ſame effect.

On the contrary, when wealth is accumulated only in the hands of the miſer, and runs to waſte from thoſe of the prodigal; when heirs of family find themſelves ſtraitened and poor, in the midſt of affluence; when the cravings of luxury ſilence even the voice of party and faction; when the hopes of meriting the rewards of compliance, or the fear of loſing what is held at diſcretion, keep men in a ſtate of ſuſpence and anxiety; when fortune, in ſhort, inſtead of being conſidered as the inſtrument of a vigorous ſpirit, becomes the idol of a covetous or a profuſe, of a rapacious or a timorous mind; the foundation on which freedom was built, may ſerve to ſupport a tyranny; and what, in one age, raiſed

raiſed the pretenſions, and foſtered the confidence of the ſubject, may, in another, incline him to ſervility, and furniſh the price to be paid for his proſtitutions. Even thoſe, who, in a vigorous age, gave the example of wealth, in the hands of the people, becoming an occaſion of freedom, may, in times of degeneracy, verify likewiſe the maxim of Tacitus, That the admiration of riches leads to deſpotical government*.

MEN who have taſted of freedom, and who have felt their perſonal rights, are not eaſily taught to bear with encroachments on either, and cannot, without ſome preparation, come to ſubmit to oppreſſion. They may receive this unhappy preparation, under different forms of government, from different hands, and arrive at the ſame end by different ways. They follow one direction in republics, another in monarchies, and in mixed governments. But whereever the ſtate has by means that do not preſerve the virtue of the ſubject, effectually guarded his ſafety; remiſſneſs, and neglect of the public, are likely to follow; and poliſhed nations of every deſcription, appear to encounter a danger, on this quarter, proportioned to the degree in which they have, during any continuance, enjoyed the uninterrupted poſſeſſion of peace and proſperity.

* Eſt apud illos et opibus honos; eoque unus imperitat, nullis jam exceptionibus, non precario jure parendi. Nec arma ut apud ceteros Germanos in promiſcuo ſed clauſa ſub cuſtode; et quidem ſervo: *&c. Tacitus de mor. Ger. c.* 44.

LIBERTY

Liberty reſults, we ſay, from the government of laws; and we are apt to conſider ſtatutes, not merely as the reſolutions and maxims of a people determined to be free, not as the writings by which their rights are kept on record; but as a power erected to guard them, and as a barrier which the caprice of man cannot trangreſs.

When a baſha, in Aſia, pretends to decide every controverſy by the rules of natural equity, we allow that he is poſſeſſed of diſcretionary powers. When a judge in Europe is left to decide, according to his own interpretation of written laws, is he in any ſenſe more reſtrained than the former? Have the multiplied words of a ſtatute an influence over the conſcience, and the heart, more powerful than that of reaſon and nature? Does the party, in any judicial proceeding, enjoy a leſs degree of ſafety, when his rights are diſcuſſed, on the foundation of a rule that is open to the underſtandings of mankind, than when they are referred to an intricate ſyſtem, which it has become the object of a ſeparate profeſſion to ſtudy and to explain?

If forms of proceeding, written ſtatutes or other conſtituents of law, ceaſe to be enforced by the very ſpirit from which they aroſe; they ſerve only to cover, not to reſtrain, the iniquities of power: they are poſſibly reſpected even by the corrupt magiſtrate, when they favour his purpoſe; but they are contemned or evaded, when they ſtand in his way: And

And the influence of laws, where they have any real effect in the preservation of liberty, is not any magic power descending from shelves that are loaded with books, but is, in reality, the influence of men resolved to be free; of men, who, having adjusted in writing the terms on which they are to live with the state, and with their fellow-subjects, are determined, by their vigilance and spirit, to make these terms be fulfilled.

We are taught, under every form of government, to apprehend usurpations, from the abuse, or from the extension of the executive power. In pure monarchies, this power is commonly hereditary, and made to descend in a determinate line. In elective monarchies, it is held for life. In republics, it is exercised during a limited time. Where men, or families, are called by election to the possession of temporary dignities, it is more the object of ambition to perpetuate, than to extend their powers. In hereditary monarchies, the sovereignty is already perpetual; and the aim of every ambitious prince, is to enlarge his prerogative. Republics, and, in times of commotion, communities of every form, are exposed to hazard, not from those only who are formally raised to places of trust, but from every person whatever, who is incited by ambition, and who is supported by faction.

It is no advantage to a prince, or other magistrate, to enjoy more power than is consistent with

the good of mankind; nor is it of any benefit to a man to be unjuſt: But theſe maxims are a feeble ſecurity againſt the paſſions and follies of men. Thoſe who are intruſted with power in any degree, are diſpoſed, from a mere diſlike of conſtraint, to remove oppoſition. Not only the monarch, who wears a hereditary crown, but the magiſtrate who holds his office for a limited time, grows fond of his dignity. The very miniſter, who depends for his place on the momentary will of his prince, and whoſe perſonal intereſts are, in every reſpect, thoſe of a ſubject, ſtill has the weakneſs to take an intereſt in the growth of prerogative, and to reckon as gain to himſelf the incroachments he has made on the rights of a people, with whom he himſelf and his family are ſoon to be numbered.

Even with the beſt intentions towards mankind, we are inclined to think, that their welfare depends, not on the felicity of their own inclinations, or the happy employment of their own talents, but on their ready compliance with what we have deviſed for their good. Accordingly, the greateſt virtue of which any ſovereign has hitherto ſhown an example, is not a deſire of cheriſhing in his people the ſpirit of freedom and of independence; but what is in itſelf ſufficiently rare, and highly meritorious, a ſteady regard to the diſtribution of juſtice in matters of property, a diſpoſition to protect and to oblige, to redreſs the grievances, and to promote the intereſt of his ſubjects. It was from a reference

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to these objects, that Titus computed the value of his time, and judged of its application. But the sword, which in this beneficent hand was drawn to protect the subject, and to procure a speedy and effectual distribution of justice, was likeways sufficient, in the hands of a tyrant, to shed the blood of the innocent, and to cancel the rights of men. The temporary proceedings of humanity, though they suspended the exercise of oppression, did not break the national chains: The prince was even the better enabled to procure that species of good which he studied; because there was no freedom remaining, and because there was no where a force to dispute his decrees, or to interrupt their execution.

Was it in vain, that Antoninus became acquainted with the characters of Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato, Dion, and Brutus? Was it in vain, that he learned to understand the form of a free community, raised on the basis of equality and justice; or of a monarchy, under which the liberties of the subject were held the most sacred object of administration*? Did he mistake the means of procuring to mankind what he points out as a blessing? Or did the absolute power with which he was furnished, in a mighty empire, only disable him from executing what his mind had perceived as a national good? In such a case, it were vain to flatter the monarch or his people. The first cannot bestow liberty, without

* M. Antoninus, lib. 1.

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raiſing a ſpirit, which may, on occaſion, ſtand in oppoſition to his own deſigns; nor the latter receive this bleſſing, while they own that it is in the right of a maſter to give or to with-hold it. The claim of juſtice is firm and peremptory. We receive favours with a ſenſe of obligation and kindneſs; but we would inforce our rights, and the ſpirit of freedom in this exertion cannot take the tone of ſupplication, or of thankfulneſs, without betraying itſelf. "You "have intreated Octavius," ſays Brutus to Cicero, "that he would ſpare thoſe who ſtand foremoſt "among the citizens of Rome. What if he will "not? Muſt we periſh? Yes; rather than owe "our ſafety to him."

Liberty is a right which every individual muſt be ready to vindicate for himſelf, and which he who pretends to beſtow as a favour, has by that very act in reality denied. Even political eſtabliſhments, though they appear to be independent of the will and arbitration of men, cannot be relied on for the preſervation of freedom; they may nouriſh, but ſhould not ſuperſede that firm and reſolute ſpirit, with which the liberal mind is always prepared to reſiſt indignities, and to refer its ſafety to itſelf.

Were a nation, therefore, given to be moulded by a ſovereign, as the clay is put into the hands of the potter, this project of beſtowing liberty on a people who are actually ſervile, is, perhaps, of all others, the moſt difficult, and requires moſt to be executed

in ſilence, and with the deepeſt reſerve. Men are qualified to receive this bleſſing, only in proportion as they are made to apprehend their own rights; and are made to reſpect the juſt pretenſions of mankind; in proportion as they are willing to ſuſtain, in their own perſons, the burden of government, and of national defence; and are willing to prefer the engagements of a liberal mind, to the enjoyments of ſloth, or the deluſive hopes of a ſafety purchaſed by ſubmiſſion and fear.

I SPEAK with reſpect, and, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, even with indulgence, to thoſe who are intruſted with high prerogatives in the political ſyſtem of nations. It is, indeed, ſeldom their fault that ſtates are inſlaved. What ſhould be expected from them, but that being actuated by human deſires, they ſhould be averſe to diſappointment, or even to delay; and in the ardour with which they purſue their object, that they ſhould break through the barriers that would ſtop their career? If millions recede before ſingle men, and ſenates are paſſive, as if compoſed of members who had no opinion or ſenſe of their own; on whoſe ſide have the defences of freedom given way, or to whom ſhall we impute their fall? To the ſubject, who has deſerted his ſtation; or to the ſovereign, who has only remained in his own; and who, if the collateral or ſubordinate members of government ſhall ceaſe to queſtion his power, muſt continue to govern without reſtraint?

It is well known, that conſtitutions framed for the preſervation of liberty, muſt conſiſt of many parts; and that ſenates, popular aſſemblies, courts of juſtice, magiſtrates of different orders, muſt combine to balance each other, while they exerciſe, ſuſtain, or check the executive power. If any part is ſtruck out, the fabric muſt totter, or fall; if any member is remiſs, the others muſt encroach. In aſſemblies conſtituted by men of different talents, habits, and apprehenſions, it were ſomething more than human that could make them agree in every point of importance; having different opinions and views, it were want of integrity to abſtain from diſputes: Our very praiſe of unanimity, therefore, is to be conſidered as a danger to liberty. We wiſh for it, at the hazard of taking in its place the remiſſneſs of men grown indifferent to the public; the venality of thoſe who have ſold the rights of their country; or the ſervility of others, who give implicit obedience to a leader by whom their minds are ſubdued. The love of the public, and reſpect to its laws, are the points in which mankind are bound to agree; but if, in matters of controverſy, the ſenſe of any individual or party is invariably purſued, the cauſe of freedom is already betrayed.

He whoſe office it is to govern a ſupine or an abject people, cannot, for a moment, ceaſe to extend his powers. Every execution of law, every movement of the ſtate, every civil and military operation,

ration, in which his power is exerted, muſt ſerve to confirm his authority, and preſent him to the view of the public, as the ſole object of conſideration, fear, and reſpect. Thoſe very eſtabliſhments which were deviſed, in one age, to limit or to direct the exerciſe of an executive power will ſerve, in another, to remove obſtructions, and to ſmooth its way; they will point out the channels in which it may run, without giving offence, or without exciting alarms, and the very councils which were inſtituted to check its incroachments, will, in a time of corruption, furniſh an aid to its uſurpations.

The paſſion for independence, and the love of dominion, frequently ariſe from a common ſource: There is, in both, an averſion to controul; and he, who, in one ſituation, cannot bruik a ſuperior, may in another, diſlike to be joined with an equal.

What the prince, under a pure or limited monarchy, is, by the conſtitution of his country, the leader of a faction would willingly become in republican governments. If he attains to this envied condition, his own inclination, or the tendency of human affairs, ſeem to open before him the career of a royal ambition: but the circumſtances in which he is deſtined to act, are very different from thoſe of a king. He encounters with men who are unuſed to diſparity; he is obliged, for his own ſecurity, to hold the dagger continually unſheathed. When he hopes to be ſafe, he poſſibly means to

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he juſt; but is hurried, from the firſt moment of his uſurpation, into every exerciſe of deſpotical power. The heir of a crown has no ſuch quarrel to maintain with his ſubjects: his ſituation is flattering; and the heart muſt be uncommonly bad, that does not glow with affection to a people, who are, at once, his admirers, his ſupport, and the ornaments of his reign. In him, perhaps, there is no explicit deſign of treſpaſſing on the rights of his ſubjects; but the forms intended to preſerve their freedom, are not, on this account, always ſafe in his hands.

SLAVERY has been impoſed upon mankind in the wantonneſs of a depraved ambition, and tyrannical cruelties have been committed in the gloomy hours of jealouſy and terror: yet theſe demons are not neceſſary to the creation, or to the ſupport of an arbitratry power. Although no policy was ever more ſucceſsful than that of the Roman republic in maintaining a national fortune; yet ſubjects, as well as their princes, frequently imagine that freedom is a clog on the proceedings of government: they imagine, that deſpotical power is beſt fitted to procure diſpatch and ſecrecy in the execution of public councils; to maintain what they are pleaſed to call *political order**, and to give a ſpeedy

* Our notion of order in civil ſociety being taken from the analogy of ſubjects inanimate and dead, is frequently falſe; we conſider commotion and action as contrary to its nature; we think that obedience, ſecrecy, and the ſilent paſſing of affairs through

ſpeedy redreſs of complaints. They even ſometimes acknowledge, that if a ſucceſſion of good princes could be found, deſpotical government is beſt calculated for the happineſs of mankind. While they reaſon thus, they cannot blame a ſovereign who, in the confidence that he is to employ his power for good purpoſes, endeavours to extend its limits; and in his own apprehenſion, ſtrives only to ſhake off the reſtraints which ſtand in the way of reaſon, and which prevent the effect of his friendly intentions.

Thus prepared for uſurpation, let him, at the head of a free ſtate, employ the force with which he is armed, to cruſh the ſeeds of apparent diſorder in every corner of his dominions; let him effectually curb the ſpirit of diſſenſion and variance among his people; let him remove the interruptions to government, ariſing from the refractory humours and the private intereſts of his ſubjects; let him collect the force of the ſtate againſt its enemies, by availing himſelf of all it can furniſh in the way of taxation and perſonal ſervice: it is extremely probable, that, even under the direction of wiſhes for the good of

through the hands of a few, are its real conſtituents. The good order of ſtones in a wall, is their being properly fixed in the places for which they are hewen; were they to ſtir the building muſt fall: but the good order of men in ſociety, is their being placed where they are properly qualified to act. The firſt is a fabric made of dead and inanimate parts, the ſecond is made of living and active members. When we ſeek in ſociety for the order of mere inaction and tranquillity, we forget the nature of our ſubject, and find the order of ſlaves, not that of freemen

mankind, he may break through every barrier of liberty, and eſtabliſh a deſpotiſm, while he flatters himſelf, that he only follows the dictates of ſenſe and propriety.

When we ſuppoſe government to have beſtowed a degree of tranquillity which we ſometimes hope to reap from it, as the beſt of its fruits, and public affairs to proceed, in the ſeveral departments of legiſlation and execution, with the leaſt poſſible interruption to commerce and lucrative arts; ſuch a ſtate like that of China, by throwing affairs into ſeparate offices, where conduct conſiſts in detail, and in the obſervance of forms, by ſuperſeding all the exertions of a great or a liberal mind, is more akin to deſpotiſm than we are apt to imagine.

Whether oppreſſion, injuſtice, and cruelty, are the only evils which attend on deſpotical government, may be conſidered apart. In the mean time it is ſufficient to obſerve, that liberty is never in greater danger that it is when we meaſure national felicity by the bleſſings which a prince may beſtow, or by the mere tranquillity which may attend on equitable adminiſtration. The ſovereign may dazzle with his heroic qualities; he may protect his ſubjects in the enjoyment of every animal advantage or pleaſure: but the benefits ariſing from liberty are of a different ſort; they are not the fruits of a virtue, and of a goodneſs, which operate in the breaſt of one man, but the communication of vir-

tue itself to many; and such a distribution of functions in civil society, as gives to numbers the exercises and occupations which pertain to their nature.

The best constitutions of government are attended with inconvenience; and the exercise of liberty may, on many occasions, give rise to complaints. When we are intent on reforming abuses, the abuses of freedom may lead us to incroach on the subject from which they are supposed to arise. Despotism itself has certain advantages, or at least, in times of civility and moderation, may proceed with so little offence, as to give no public alarm. These circumstances may lead mankind, in the very spirit of reformation, or by mere inattention, to apply or to admit of dangerous innovations in the state of their policy.

Slavery, however, is not always introduced by mistake; it is sometimes imposed in the spirit of violence and rapine. Princes become corrupt as well as their people; and whatever may have been the origin of despotical government, its pretensions, when fully declared, give rise between the sovereign and his subjects, to a contest which force alone can decide. These pretensions have a dangerous aspect to the person, the property, or the life of every subject; they alarm every passion in the human breast; they disturb the supine; they deprive the venal of his hire; they declare war on the corrupt as well as the virtuous; they are tamely admitted

only by the coward; but even to him must be supported by a force that can work on his fears. This force the conqueror brings from abroad; and the domestic usurper endeavours to find in his faction at home.

WHEN a people is accustomed to arms, it is difficult for a part to subdue the whole; or before the establishment of disciplined armies, it is difficult for any usurper to govern the many by the help of a few. These difficulties, however, the policy of civilized and commercial nations has sometimes removed; and by forming a distinction between civil and military professions, by committing the keeping and the enjoyment of liberty to different hands, has prepared the way for the dangerous alliance of faction with military power, in opposition to mere political forms, and the rights of mankind.

A PEOPLE who are disarmed in compliance with this fatal refinement, have rested their safety on the pleadings of reason and of justice at the tribunal of ambition and of force. In such an extremity, laws are quoted, and senates are assembled, in vain. They who compose a legislature, or who occupy the civil departments of state, may deliberate on the messages they receive from the camp or the court; but if the bearer, like the centurion who brought the petition of Octavius to the Roman senate, shew the hilt of his sword*, they find that petitions are

* Sueton.

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become commands, and that they themſelves are become the pageants, not the repoſitories of ſovereign power.

THE reflections of this ſection may be unequally applied to nations of unequal extent. Small communities, however corrupted, are not prepared for deſpotical government: Their members, crouded together, and contiguous to the ſeats of power, never forget their relation to the public; they pry, with habits of familiarity and freedom, into the pretenſions of thoſe who would rule; and where the love of equality, and the ſenſe of juſtice, have failed, they act on motives of faction, emulation, and envy. The exiled Tarquin had his adherents at Rome; but if by their means he had recovered his ſtation, it is probable, that in the exerciſe of his royalty, he muſt have entered on a new ſcene of contention with the very party that reſtored him to power.

IN proportion as territory is extended, its parts loſe their relative importance to the whole. Its inhabitants ceaſe to perceive their connection with the ſtate, and are ſeldom united in the execution of any national, or even of any factious deſigns. Diſtance from the ſeats of adminiſtration, and indifference to the perſons who contend for preferment, teach the majority to conſider themſelves as the ſubjects of a ſovereignty, not as the members of a political body. It is even remarkable, that enlargement of territory, by rendering the individual of leſs conſe-

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quence to the public, and lefs able to intrude with his counfel, actually tends to reduce national affairs within a narrower compafs, as well as to diminifh the numbers who are confulted in legiflation, or in other matters of government.

THE diforders to which a great empire is expofed, require fpeedy prevention, vigilance, and quick execution. Diftant provinces muft be kept in fubjection by military force; and the dictatorial powers, which, in free ftates, are fometimes raifed to quell infurrections, or to oppofe other occafional evils, appear, under a certain extent of dominion, at all times equally neceffary to fufpend the diffolution of a body, whofe parts were affembled, and muft be cemented, by meafures forcible, decifive, and fecret. Among the circumftances, therefore, which in the event of national profperity, and in the refult of commercial arts, lead to the eftablifhment of defpotifm, there is none, perhaps, that arrives at this termination, with fo fure an aim, as the perpetual enlargement of territory. In every ftate, the freedom of its members depends on the balance and adjuftment of its interior parts; and the exiftence of any fuch freedom among mankind, depends on the balance of nations. In the progrefs of conqueft, thofe who are fubdued are faid to have loft their liberties; but from the hiftory of mankind, to conquer, or to be conquered, has appeared, in effect, the fame.

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SECTION VI.

Of the Progreſs and Termination of Deſpotiſm.

MANKIND, when they degenerate, and tend to their ruin, as well as when they improve, and gain real advantages, frequently proceed by ſlow, and almoſt inſenſible ſteps. If, during ages of activity and vigour, they fill up the meaſure of national greatneſs to a height which no human wiſdom could at a diſtance foreſee; they actually incur, in ages of relaxation and weakneſs, many evils which their fears did not ſuggeſt, and which, perhaps, they had thought far removed by the tide of ſucceſs and proſperity.

WE have already obſerved, that where men are remiſs or corrupted, the virtue of their leaders, or the good intention of their magiſtrates, will not always ſecure them in the poſſeſſion of political freedom. Implicit ſubmiſſion to any leader, or the uncontrouled exerciſe of any power, even when it is intended to operate for the good of mankind, may frequently end in the ſubverſion of legal eſtabliſhments. This fatal revolution, by whatever means it is accompliſhed, terminates in military government; and this, though the ſimpleſt of all governments, is rendered complete by degrees. In the firſt period of its exerciſe over men who have acted as members of a free community, it can have

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only laid the foundation, not compleated the fabric, of a despotical policy. The usurper, who has possessed, with an army, the centre of a great empire, sees around him, perhaps, the shattered remains of a former constitution; he may hear the murmurs of a reluctant and unwilling submission; he may even see danger in the aspect of many, from whose hands he may have wrested the sword, but whose minds he has not subdued, nor reconciled to his power.

The sense of personal rights, or the pretension to privilege and honours, which remain among certain orders of men, are so many bars in the way of a recent usurpation. If they are not suffered to decay with age, and to wear away in the progress of a growing corruption, they must be broken with violence, and the entrance to every new accession of power must be stained with blood. The effect, even in this case, is frequently tardy. The Roman spirit, we know, was not entirely extinguished under a succession of masters, and under a repeated application of blood-shed and poison. The noble and respectable family still aspired to its original honours: The history of the republic, the writings of former times, the monuments of illustrious men, and the lessons of philosophy fraught with heroic conceptions, continued to nourish the soul in retirement, and formed those eminent characters, whose elevation, and whose fate, are, perhaps, the most

most affecting objects of human story. Though unable to oppose the general bent to servility, they became, on account of their supposed inclinations, objects of distrust and aversion; and were made to pay with their blood, the price of a sentiment which they fostered in silence, and which glowed only in the heart.

WHILE despotism proceeds in its progress, by what principle is the sovereign conducted in the choice of measures that tend to establish his government? By a mistaken apprehension of his own good, sometimes even of that of his people, and by the desire which he feels on every particular occasion, to remove the obstructions which impede the execution of his will. When he has fixed a resolution, whoever reasons or remonstrates against it is an enemy; when his mind is elated, whoever pretends to eminence, and is disposed to act for himself, is a rival. He would leave no dignity in the state, but what is dependent on himself; no active power, but what carries the expression of his momentary pleasure*. Guided by a perception as unerring as that of instinct, he never fails to select the proper objects of his antipathy or of his favour. The aspect of independence repels him; that of servility attracts. The tendency of his administration is to quiet every restless spirit, and to assume every function of go-

* Insurgere paulatim, munia senatus, magistratuum, legum in se trahere.

vernment to himself*. When the power is adequate to the end, it operates as much in the hands of those who do not perceive the termination, as it does in the hands of others by whom it is best understood: The mandates of either, when just, should not be disputed; when erroneous or wrong, they are supported by force.

You must die was the answer of Octavius to every suit, from a people that implored his mercy. It was the sentence with some of his successors pronounced against every citizen that was eminent for his birth or his virtues. But are the evils of despotism confined to the cruel and sanguinary methods, by which a recent dominion over a refractory and a turbulent people is established or maintained? And is death the greatest calamity which can afflict mankind under an establishment by which they are divested of all their rights? They are, indeed, frequently suffered to live; but distrust, and jealousy, the sense of personal meanness, and the anxieties which arise from the care of a wretched interest, are made to possess the soul; every citizen is reduced to a slave; and every charm by which the community engaged its members, has ceased to exist. Obedience is the only duty that remains, and this

* It is ridiculous to hear men of a restless ambition, who would be the only actors in every scene, sometimes complain of a refractory spirit in mankind; as if the same disposition from which they desire to usurp every office, did not incline every other person to reason and to act at least for himself.

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is exacted by force. If under such an establishment, it be necessary to witness scenes of debasement and horror, at the hazard of catching the infection, death becomes a relief; and the libation which Thrasea was made to pour from his arteries, is to be considered as a proper sacrifice of gratitude to Jove the Deliverer*.

Oppression and cruelty are not always necessary to despotical government; and even when present, are but a part of its evils. It is founded on corruption, and on the suppression of all the civil and the political virtues; it requires its subjects to act from motives of fear; it would asswage the passions of a few men at the expence of mankind; and would erect the peace of society itself on the ruins of that freedom and confidence from which alone the enjoyment, the force, and the elevation of the human mind, are found to arise.

During the existence of any free constitution, and whilst every individual possessed his rank and his privilege, or had his apprehension of personal rights, the members of every community were to one another objects of consideration and of respect; every point to be carried in civil society, required

* Porrectisque utriusque brachii venis, postquam cruorem effudit, humum super spargens, proprius vocato Quæstore, *Libemus*, inquit, *Jovi Liberatori*. Specta juvenis; et omen quidem Dii prohibeant; ceterum in ea tempora natus es, quibus firmare animum deceat constantibus exemplis. *Tacit. Ann. lib.* 16.

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the exercise of talents, of wisdom, persuasion, and vigour, as well as of power. But it is the highest refinement of a despotical government, to rule by simple commands, and to exclude every art but that of compulsion. Under the influence of this policy, therefore, the occasions which employed and cultivated the understandings of men, which awakened their sentiments, and kindled their imaginations, are gradually removed; and the progress by which mankind attained to the honours of their nature, in being engaged to act in society upon a liberal footing, was not more uniform, or less interrupted, than that by which they degenerate in this unhappy condition.

When we hear of the silence which reigns in the seraglio, we are made to believe, that speech itself is become unnecessary; and that the signs of the mute are sufficient to carry the most important mandates of government. No arts, indeed, are required to maintain an ascendant where terror alone is opposed to force, where the powers of the sovereign are delegated entire to every subordinate officer: Nor can any station bestow a liberality of mind in a scene of silence and dejection, where every breast is possessed with jealousy and caution, and where no object, but animal pleasure, remains to balance the sufferings of the sovereign himself, or those of his subjects.

In other states, the talents of men are sometimes improved by the exercises which belong to an eminent

nent ſtation: but here the maſter himſelf is probably the rudeſt and leaſt cultivated animal of the herd; he is inferior to the ſlave whom he raiſes from a ſervile office to the firſt places of truſt or of dignity in his court. The primitive ſimplicity which formed ties of familiarity and affection betwixt the ſovereign and the keeper of his herds *, appears, in the abſence of all affections, to be reſtored, or to be counterfeited amidſt the ignorance and brutality which equally characteriſe all orders of men, or rather which level the ranks, and deſtroy the diſtinction of perſons in a deſpotical court.

Caprice and paſſion are the rules of government with the prince. Every delegate of power is left to act by the ſame direction; to ſtrike when he is provoked; to favour when he is pleaſed. In what relates to revenue, juriſdiction or police, every governor of a province acts like a leader in an enemy's country: comes armed with the terrors of fire and ſword; and inſtead of a tax, levies a contribution by force: he ruins or ſpares as either may ſerve his purpoſe. When the clamours of the oppreſſed, or the reputation of a treaſure amaſſed at the expence of a province, have reached the ears of the ſovereign, the extortioner is indeed made to purchaſe impunity by imparting a ſhare, or by forfeiting the whole of his ſpoil; but no reparation is made to the injured; nay, the crimes of the miniſter are firſt employed to plunder the people, and afterwards puniſhed to fill the coffers of the ſovereign.

* See Odyſſey.

In this total diſcontinuance of every art that relates to juſt government and national policy, it is remarkable, that even the trade of the ſoldier is itſelf greatly neglected. Diſtruſt and jealouſy on the part of the prince, come in aid of his ignorance and incapacity; and theſe cauſes operating together, ſerve to diſtroy the very foundation on which his power is eſtabliſhed. Any undiſciplined rout of armed men paſſes for an army, whilſt a weak, diſperſed, and unarmed people, are ſacrificed to military diſorder, or expoſed to depredation on the frontier from an enemy, whom the deſire of ſpoil, or the hopes of conqueſt, may have drawn to their neighbourhood.

The Romans extended their empire till they left no poliſhed nation to be ſubdued, and found a frontier which was every where ſurrounded by fierce and barbarous tribes; they even pierced through uncultivated deſerts, in order to remove to a greater diſtance the moleſtation of ſuch troubleſome neighbours, and in order to poſſeſs the avenues through which they feared their attacks. But this policy put the finiſhing hand to the internal corruption of the ſtate. A few years of tranquillity were ſufficient to make even the government forget its danger; and in the cultivated province, prepared for the enemy, a tempting prize and an eaſy victory.

When by the conqueſt and annexation of every rich and cultivated province, the meaſure of empire is full, two parties are ſufficient to comprehend mankind; that of the pacific and the wealthy, who dwell

dwell within the pale of empire; and that of the poor, the rapacious, and the fierce, who are inured to depredation and war. The last bear to the first nearly the same relation which the wolf and the lion bear to the fold; and they are naturally engaged in a state of hostility.

WERE despotic empire, mean-time, to continue for ever unmolested from abroad, while it retains that corruption on which it was founded, it appears to have in itself no principle of new life, and presents no hope of restoration to freedom and political vigour. That which the despotical *master has sown, cannot quicken unless it die*; it must languish and expire by the effect of its own abuse, before the human spirit can spring up anew, or bear those fruits which constitute the honour and the felicity of human nature. In times of the greatest debasement, indeed, commotions are felt; but very unlike the agitations of a free people: they are either the agonies of nature, under the sufferings to which men are exposed; or mere tumults, confined to a few who stand in arms about the prince, and who, by their conspiracies, assassinations, and murders serve only to plunge the pacific inhabitant still deeper in the horrors of fear or despair. Scattered in the provinces, unarmed, unacquainted with the sentiments of union and confederacy, restricted by habit to a wretched œconomy, and dragging a precarious life on those possessions which the extortions of government have left; the people can no where, under these circumstances, assume the spirit

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of a community, nor form any liberal combination for their own defence. The injured may complain; and while he cannot obtain the mercy of government, he may implore the commiſeration of his fellow-ſubject. But that fellow-ſubject is comforted, that the hand of oppreſſion has not ſeized on himſelf: he ſtudies his intereſt, or ſnatches his pleaſure, under that degree of ſafety which obſcurity and concealment beſtow.

The commercial arts, which ſeem to require no foundation in the minds of men, but the regard to intereſt; no encouragement, but the hopes of gain, and the ſecure poſſeſſion of property, muſt periſh under the precarious tenure of ſlavery, and under the apprehenſion of danger ariſing from the reputation of wealth. National poverty, however, and the ſuppreſſion of commerce, are the means by which deſpotiſm comes to accompliſh its own deſtruction. Where there are no longer any profits to corrupt, or fears to deter, the charm of dominion is broken, and the naked ſlave, as awake from a dream, is aſtoniſhed to find he is free. When the fence is deſtroyed, the wilds are open, and the herd breaks looſe. The paſture of the cultivated field is no longer preferred to that of the deſert. The ſufferer willingly flies where the extortions of government cannot overtake him: where even the timid and the ſervile may recollect they are men; where the tyrant may threaten, but where he is known to be no more than a fellow-creature;

where he can take nothing but life, and even this at the hazard of his own.

Agreeably to this description, the vexations of tyranny have overcome, in many parts of the East, the desire of settlement. The inhabitants of a village quit their habitations, and infest the public ways; those of the valleys fly to the mountains, and, equipt for flight, or possessed of a strong hold, subsist by depredation, and by the war they make on their former masters.

These disorders conspire with the impositions of government to render the remaining settlements still less secure: But while devastation and ruin appear on every side, mankind are forced anew upon those confederacies, acquire again that personal confidence and vigour, that social attachment, that use of arms, which, in former times, rendered a small tribe the seed of a great nation; and which may again enable the emancipated slave to begin the career of civil and commercial arts. When human nature appears in the utmost state of corruption, it has actually begun to reform.

In this manner, the scenes of human life have been frequently shifted. Security and presumption forfeit the advantages of prosperity; resolution and conduct retrieve the ills of adversity; and mankind while they have nothing on which to rely but their virtue, are prepared to gain every advantage; and

while they confide most in their good fortune, are most exposed to feel its reverse. We are apt to draw these observations into rule; and when we are no longer willing to act for our country, we plead in excuse of our own weakness or folly, a supposed fatality in human affairs.

The institutions of men, if not calculated for the preservation of virtue, are, indeed, likely to have an end as well as a beginning: But so long as they are effectual to this purpose, they have at all times an equal principle of life which nothing but an external force can suppress; no nation ever suffered internal decay but from the vice of its members. We are sometimes willing to acknowledge this vice in our countrymen; but who ever was willing to acknowledge it in himself? It may be suspected, however, that we do more than acknowledge it, when we cease to oppose its effects, and when we plead a fatality, which, at least, in the breast of every individual, is dependent on himself. Men of real fortitude, integrity, and ability, are well placed in every scene; they reap, in every condition, the principal enjoyments of their nature; they are the happy instruments of providence employed for the good of mankind; or, if we must change this language, they show, that while they are destined to live, the states they compose are likeways doomed by the fates to survive, and to prosper.

THE END.